WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE

WILLIAM EVANS

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By

WILLIAM EVANS, Ph.D., D.D.

Author of *The Great Doctrines of the Bible, Personal Soul-Winning, How to Prepare Sermons and Gospel Addresses, Through the Bible Book by Book, The Gospels and Acts, Romans and I and II Corinthians, The Pentateuch, The Christian: His Creed and Conduct, Epochs in the Life of Christ, The Book of Books, How to Memorize, Book-Method of Bible Study, Outline Study of the Bible, The Shepherd Psalm,* etc.

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FOREWORD

In judging this volume it should be remembered for whom it is particularly prepared. It is for *the young convert*—the Christian who does not know the simple and yet fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. It is prepared for the man who knows Christ as a personal Saviour by experimental knowledge, but who has not had any specific and definite instruction in the leading doctrines of the Christian faith.

Scripture references are quite numerous, because it is our purpose to send the reader back to his Bible in order that he may have a "Thus saith the Lord" as an anchor for his faith. Both the Authorized and American Standard Versions are used for the quotations, whichever version most clearly sets forth the sense of the passage cited being used in that particular instance.

Necessarily, the subjects are briefly treated, for this volume is but a *primer* of Christian Doctrine. An exhaustive study of these and the other doctrines composing the Christian faith may be found in *The Great Doctrines of the Bible,* by the author, and published by The Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, Ill.

It is our earnest wish and prayer that this volume will be greatly used in the building up of those who are either young in or ignorant of "the things pertaining to the King."

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTORY

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

The ignorance among Christians regarding the fundamental doctrines of their faith is surprisingly great, widespread and alarming. Definite knowledge and instruction in other and far less important spheres of life is being insisted upon, why not, then, in the highest realm—that of a man's religion? Ignorance in any sphere of life is calamitous; in religion it is fatal. "My people perish for lack of knowledge." How disastrous it would be to human life, safety and happiness if the doctor were as ignorant of his *materia medica,* the druggist of his *pharmacopœa,* or the lawyer and judge of his *statutes,* as the average Christian is of the great and fundamental doctrines of his faith.

Not to know God is to fail of eternal life (John 17:3). To be ignorant of those great truths which have to do with spiritual and eternal verities is to miss life's greatest quest: to be at last "forever with the Lord" in "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Much of the failure in Christian experience comes from ignorance of the great facts of redemption. Romans, chapters six to eight, describe the struggle of the soul to gain the mastery over sinful heredity and adverse environment. That ignorance of the great facts of redemp-

tion lies at the basis of such failure is evident from the recurring phrase found in this connection as used by the apostle: "Know ye not?" or, "Are ye ignorant?" (6:3, 16; 7:1; 11:2; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24). Certain great Christian truths have to be *reckoned* on Romans (6:11) in order that a victorious life may be achieved. But they must be first known before they can be thus reckoned (cf. Romans 10:14-17). When a Christian distinctly appreciates his *standing* in Christ it is going to make a great deal of difference in his spiritual state and condition while a pilgrim here on earth.

Ignorance of the great truths of our Christian religion has brought gloom, despair, and even suicide to many. A lady, accompanied by her sister, called on a minister for spiritual aid. The sister was about to be committed to an asylum for the insane. She had already attempted to take her own life. Her gloom and despondence was attributed to spiritual depression. She had decided that she had committed "the sin against the Holy Ghost," that she was "guilty of the unpardonable sin," and that, consequently, there was "no forgiveness" for her, that she was therefore eternally lost. This conclusion had been reached on the basis of her interpretation (rather misinterpretation) of certain parts of the Bible (e.g., Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26, 27; Matthew 12:31, 32). The minister carefully instructed this lady, removed the misinterpretations, and caused her to rightly understand the Scriptures. Within a few weeks the clouded brain became again clear, the gloom passed away, and she was her real self. In a real sense this woman was perishing for lack of knowledge of the great facts of her salvation.

With greater knowledge in spiritual matters would come correspondingly greater results in Christian service. One is

amazed at the great increase in farm products brought about by scientific instruction in the cultivation of the soil. In like manner, greater "fruit of the Spirit" would undoubtedly follow a better and deeper knowledge of the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2; 1 Corinthians 12:1; Galatians 5:22, 23).

Far too many Christians, while spiritually minded, are not *scripturally instructed.* This fact constitutes the reason why so many are led away from the truth into the false *"isms,"* by every wind of strange doctrine that blows about them, by "the cunning sleight and craftiness of men," and by "the wiles of error" (Ephesians 4:14) as represented by such erroneous sects as Christian Science, Spiritualism, Millennial Dawn and Mormonism. And, is it not a fact that the reason why it is so hard to win such people back to the truth is because they become so soon indoctrinated in the erroneous beliefs they have accepted? See with what avidity the Scientist devours Mrs. Eddy's book, *Science and Health;* the Millennial Dawnist, *The Plan of the Ages!* Would that every Christian devoured his Bible in like manner! When such Bible study takes place, when Christians become thus thoroughly indoctrinated in the tenets of their faith, then false cults will die for lack of uninstructed professing Christian material on which they feed and grow.

It is as incumbent upon the Christian to grow in the knowledge of God as in divine grace (2 Peter 3:18). There should be no conflict between the growth in knowledge and faith; in reality there is none. The Scriptures do not make the invidious distinction between believing with the head and the heart so often made nowadays. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Increase in spiritual knowledge and faith should go to-

gether (Romans 10:9, 10). "They that know thee shall put their trust in thee." Too often our faith is limited by our ignorance (Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Acts 3:17). If we knew more we would doubtless believe more (John 4:10; 17:3). We trust God as far as we have come to know Him. Unfortunately He is still to many "an unknown God" (Acts 17:23).

There is a crying need today of a more intelligent and better understood faith on the part of the followers of Jesus Christ. We do not know God, Christ, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the great doctrines of our faith as we should. The early Christian Church had men of rare scholarship and goodness to devote their entire time to the definite instruction in Christian doctrine of those who offered themselves for membership in the church (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15). The great pity is that such catechetical instruction has been allowed so largely to pass out of the domain of the church, and that so many of the youth of our churches have been deprived of so great a boon.

Knowledge as the true basis of practice.

It is a "false and pernicious reasoning that would make belief nothing, and practice everything. No exhortation to a strong, virtuous and holy life will be able effectually to grip the heart and conscience that does not have behind it the conviction of a great truth. We should remember what the Presbyterian Standards have for centuries affirmed: 'That truth is in order to goodness.' " What a man believes or does not believe affects, and very seriously too, his whole conduct. Back of all the exhortations of the Apostle Paul to a holy life, a good conscience, and pure living there will be found a call for a knowledge of and faith in "sound doctrine" (cf. 1 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:14; Titus 1:9).

The needs of the age demand men with a definite and clearly stated faith, particularly with regard to the fundamentals of Christian belief. It was such a knowledge and persuasion that gave apostolic preaching an authority and power that staggers us and shames our faintly-expressed and compromising presentation of the truth. The apostles spoke with authority; today many have lost that high accentuation and positive note which gave those first preachers such wonderful audacity and positiveness in their proclamation of the truths of the gospel.

Settled Things

Some things in "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" are definitely and clearly settled. We ought to know what they are, and declare them unhesitatingly, fearless as to consequences. We should hew to the line, let the chips fall where they will. The apostle's words: "Prove all things" have been greatly misunderstood. Some things in the Christian faith have been settled once for all. They are not in need of any proof save that of experience. They have passed beyond the experimental stage, they now have their place in the realm of certainty. Such certainties formed "the form (or outline) of sound doctrine" of which the apostle speaks in the Pastoral Epistles, and to which he so uncompromisingly demands adherence. Just as in science certain things are assumed and used as a working hypothesis, without which there could be no experimental progress, so is it with the Christian faith: there are certain fundamental doctrines "which are fully established among us" (Luke 1:1-3, R. V.), and which were "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) without the knowledge of which there can not very well be any advancement in Christian faith, practice or service.

Every Christian, be he a leader or a follower, will find his faith challenged again and again. It is incumbent upon him, therefore, to be able to give to every man that asketh him a reason for the hope that is within him. He must be able to say, "Credo!" (I believe), and state *what* he believes, and *why* he believes it. To aid in this needy and worthy purpose is the aim of this book.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLE

The supreme revelation of God—far greater than the revelation of Himself in nature, history, or providence—is found in the sacred Scriptures: the Bible. We would be ignorant of God, His nature, will, plans, purposes; of Christ, and the great doctrines of our salvation, or the Holy Spirit and His wonderful ministrations towards believers in Christ, and of our future destiny in the great eternity, did we not possess the revelation of these things as contained in the Bible. At the foundation of all our spiritual knowledge, then, lies "The Word of God." The Holy Spirit usually does not operate apart from this Word. Far more important, in a sense, is the study of the Scriptures than is prayer to the child of God. How would we know what to pray for, how to pray acceptably, and to whom to pray did we not have the written revelation of these things? When we pray *we* talk to God; when we read and study His Word *He* talks to us. Which is the more important, think you: that we talk to Him, or that He talk to us?

The Christian should know that the Bible will always be spoken against; therefore he should not fear opposition to the Word.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

The Bible even as the Christ, has ever been, and ever will be while time shall last, "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence"; that on which "many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken" (cf. Isaiah

8:14, 15). There is no more fiercely attacked book today than the Bible—attacked by both friends and foes. It may be said that the Bible is, today, actually suffering more from the attacks made upon it by its professed friends than from all the machinations of its enemies. The destructive higher criticism which has done so much to destroy faith in the supernatural revelation found in the Scriptures will have much to answer for in the great day of reckoning.

The faith of the Christian should not be shaken because of these attacks. God has told us not to be disturbed over them. He says: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste" (Isaiah 28:16). These words are true of the incarnate and written Word alike. The words "he that believeth shall not be in haste" mean that he who puts confidence in the Word, "shall not be put to shame or confusion at such a time." The Christian need not worry when he sees the Bible being attacked. It is "an anvil that has worn out many hammers."

God has forewarned us to expect that some builders will refuse to build upon this stone, and that they will scorn it and cast it aside. But He also assures us that the stone will remain unshaken, and that he that buildeth upon it "will not make haste"—that is to say, he will not be thrown into panic or anxiety when confronted with such opposition. The Word of God will abide even though heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:18).

The past centuries have witnessed forms of opposition to the Word of God much more severe than those which characterize the criticism in our day. One has only to think back to that dark period at the birth of Christianity when its Founder lay dead in that tomb in Joseph's garden. Surely

no enterprise ever seemed more hopeless or so completely at an end. Yet forth from the shadow of that cross and tomb there went forth a band of men to proclaim the truths contained in the Bible, and that with glorious victory and unprecedented success.

Or, again, one has only to look back upon those gloomy days when the Apostle Paul, the champion, the leader, the foremost representative of Christianity, lay languishing in the Roman prison, his head about to be laid upon the executioner's block, in order to realize in what straits the religion of Christ then found itself. Yet it survived even this shock.

The student of history has but to think of those fierce days of opposition from paganism with its gross sensuality; of oriental philosophy, with its keen logic and reason; of the renaissance of the fifteenth century, with its worship of reason and attempted dethronement of faith, to understand that if the Bible had not been a divine book it would have been destroyed centuries ago.

So dire was the condition of Christianity in England in the eighteenth century that Bishop Butler in his "Advertisement" to his *Analogy of Religion* says: "It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject for inquiry; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious; and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule." Can the greatest pessimist amongst us say that Christianity is in anything like such a condition today?

Voltaire said that in one hundred years from his day, the Bible would be an unknown book; that if a man wanted to find it he would have to go to some antiquarian bookstore, and there, on some back shelf, he might, perhaps, find

a copy of the Bible. Over one hundred years have passed since Voltaire made this statement, and it does not look as though it were anywhere near being fulfilled, for the Bible today is a more popular book than ever before in all its history. We venture to say that the theological controversies raging around the Bible today are nothing but a rehash of those of the past centuries, served up in new dress, as a comparison will show.

The Bible withstood the shocks of those days, and why should it not withstand the same shocks today? In spite of all opposition, the church of Christ today has more members, builds more churches, circulates more Bibles, and makes her influence felt all over the world more than ever in all her previous history.

We should not, therefore, fear that Christianity and the Bible are going to pieces because it is asserted that the *scholars* of the day are against it. Of course, it is not true that the scholars of the world are arrayed against the Bible. Professor Tait of Edinburgh, a distinguished representative of physical science, in the *International Review,* denied such a statement. He asked who were the *advanced, best, ablest* thinkers of the past, or of that time. He then showed that, with a few exceptions, the scholars were on the side of the Bible and orthodoxy. The late George C. Romanes, who, after a long eclipse of the faith, died a believer, in addressing the students of Cambridge University, said that all the most illustrious names were listed on the side of orthodoxy; Sir W. Thompson, Sir George Stokes, Professors Tait, Adams, Clark, Maxwell, and Bailey—and the conditions are practically unchanged today.

But if it were true that scholarship is arrayed against the Bible, that fact would not predict or spell defeat or failure. Scholarship has never saved the church or brought

it back from its backslidings to warmth or spiritual fervor. Philosophy and science never have, never can save a soul. We are saved by faith, not by scholarship. Jesus Christ did not choose a company of university men to be His disciples and apostles, to go forth and win the world for God. We are not disparaging scholarship; we need it, and the more consecrated scholarship we have the better for the interests of the Bible and Christianity. No premium should be put upon ignorance. The principal authors of the Old and New Testaments, Moses and Paul, were scholars. What we do assert is that Christianity is not dependent upon scholarship (1 Corinthians 1:24-26).

We need not fear the increase in the knowledge of the sciences. Voltaire said that the Bible would not survive a century after the law of gravitation had been discovered. Yet we know that the discoverer of that law, Sir Isaac Newton, was a humble Christian man; and Christianity still survives, even though the law of gravitation is an acknowledged scientific fact. Strauss, the skeptic, maintained that the Copernican system would give the deathblow to Christianity and the Bible; but who is there today who feels that his faith in Christianity is even shaken because he believes that the earth revolves around the sun, and not, as the ancients believed, the opposite? When geology made its proud boast that the earth is older than six thousand years, some good people trembled for the survival of Genesis, but whose faith in Christ or in God is shaken today by the suggestion that the "days" of Genesis may be periods of time rather than days of twenty-four hours? The Bible has nothing to fear from the pick-axe of the geologist, from the telescope of the astronomer, from the skull of the anthropologist, from the instrument of the chemist, or from the pen of the scientific writer.

Every Christian should know how to approach the Bible.

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalms 119:18).

First, his approach should be a *personal one.*

He should read and study the Bible firsthand, and for himself. He should be more anxious to hear what the Spirit will teach him, through prayerful waiting, what the Word of God actually says, than what writers and commentators have to say about what it says, or what they think it says or, as is sometimes the case, what it should say. It is better to ask the Bible what it says than to tell it what to say.

We are living in an age of predigested foods—foods someone else has masticated first, forsooth. Such food may be all right for invalids and dyspeptics; but the robust, sound, healthy man would rather do his own mastication.

Some people study books about nature and call that nature study. The best place to study nature is in the fields and woods. Books and pictures are but reflections of nature. If you want to enjoy the beauty of a garden you do not send someone else out to look at it for you. You do not study nature by proxy; why then should you study the word of God by proxy?

It is related that once when Alexander went to visit Diogenes, the old philosopher was reading a book with his back towards the sun. Alexander took his place behind Diogenes, between him and the sun, and so cast a shadow on the book.

"What can I do for you, Diogenes?" said Alexander.

"Get out of my light so that I may read," replied the philosopher.

And so say we to the books and helps that we are prone to substitute for the Word of God. Helps they may be towards the understanding of it, but substitutes for the first-

hand study of the Scriptures by the aid of the Holy Spirit they never can be. Let the Bible speak to you for itself. Listen, yourself, to its voice. If it is my health you are discussing, then I have a right to be heard, for I know how I feel better than the doctors or you can tell me. So if the Bible is the issue, then let it speak for itself. Let it give its own account of how it came to be (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21), and what are the conditions it imposes on those who would understand its teachings (1 Corinthians 2:10-16).

Second, the Christian should approach the Bible as *a unique Book.*

"As man is among the animals, so is the Bible among books." It is not a matter of difference with regard to degree, but of intrinsic quality. All other books are human; the Bible is divine. All other books are man-wrought; the Bible is God-breathed. Other books are the products of the human understanding; the Bible is the result of the movings in the hearts of holy men by the Holy Spirit of God. The Bible is not like the books of other religions: they are comparative; the Bible is not in that class; it is superlative. It stands alone, and receives the obeisance of the sheaves of mere literature surrounding it, just as the sheaves of Joseph's brethren bowed to his sheaf.

The Bible is not *a* book; it is *the* Book. For this reason it is impossible for the Christian to read the Bible "just as he would read any other book," as he is so often told he should do. He cannot do it because the Bible is *not like* other books. Shall a man read a letter from his revered and departed mother just as he would read a patent-medicine advertisement? He simply cannot do it. One can read the Bible as he reads other books only when other books make the same claims that the Bible makes for itself.

And even then the rival claimants must be subjected to strictest criticism and judgment. But no other book in fact makes claims such as the Bible makes. It was John McNeill, the Scottish preacher, who, dealing with this subject, said: "You ask me to look on the Bible as I would on any other book? You might as well ask me to look upon every other woman as I look upon my wife. I simply cannot do it. I won't do it. You may call me narrow and a bigot, and straightlaced, all that, and more too, if you like. But after you have had your say, I must tell you that after I have looked on other women I am powerfully prejudiced in favor of my wife Peggy."

We cannot look upon the Bible as we do upon any other Book. There is something in the Bible that will not let us do it. Can we read the Bible ignorant of all its superior claims, its unique history, its marvellous achievements, its unparalleled influence upon the life of individuals, nations and races? It would be consummate foolishness to attempt such a thing even were it possible, which it most certainly is not.

Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, and other noted writers are a literary luxury; the Bible is a vital necessity; they are cake, the Bible is bread. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," said Jesus. He meant to say that the Bible is life-giving and life-sustaining. This cannot be said of any other or all other books in the world. The Bible is in a class all by itself. It is not comparative; it is superlative. The Christian must recognize this fact in his approach to it. It is literature—it is true; it is the "world's best literature." But it is more; it is Scripture. There is a difference between the two things: literature is the letter; Scripture is the letter inbreathed by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16).

Other sacred books are of the earth, earthy; the Bible is the revelation from heaven—true the mold is human but the gold is divine. Other sacred books are man reaching after God; the Bible is the reach of God after man. Other sacred books contain man's thoughts about God, the Bible contains God's thoughts about man.

He should approach the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16).

When we speak of the Bible as being *inspired* we mean that the sacred writings are the result of a certain influence or influences exerted by God upon their authors; that the writings are "God-breathed," as the word literally means; that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (i. e., it did not originate with the private impulse of any particular individual). "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20, 21, R. V.). We do not have in the Scriptures the meditations of men about God, but the divinely inspired thoughts and words of God about men (1 Thessalonians 2:13). And there is quite a difference between these two things.

The word "inspired" is a strong one and indicates the strong, conscious inbreathing of God into men, qualifying them to give utterance to truth. The Scriptures are the result of the divine inbreathing, just as human speech is uttered by the breathing through man's mouth. The participle "moved" may be translated "when moved," thereby declaring that the Scriptures were not written by mere men, or at their own or any other human being's suggestion, but by holy men *when* they were moved upon, compelled, yes

driven by the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was specially and miraculously present in and with the writers of the Scriptures, revealing to them truths which they had not known before, and guiding them alike in the record of these truths and of the transactions which they may have copied from existing material, and transactions and even events of which they were eye and ear witnesses, so that they were able to present them with substantial accuracy and without error to the minds of others. This is our claim for the original autographs of the Scriptures—that they are the inspired, authoritative, and infallible Word of God.

He should approach the Bible as the Book of final authority in matters of faith and practice.

"He taught them as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29).

The Bible is not to be looked upon as advisory or suggestive, but commandatory and imperative. It is not a volume of opinions; it is a Book of commands. It does not say, "It is suggested, recommended, or advised," but it is written, "commanded." It is not only true; it is absolute and final truth. No other book dare usurp its place, authority or function. The Bible alone, of all other books, has the right to command my life, to say what I shall believe, to command how I shall act. The Word of God shall "judge me in the last day," yea, it is my judge now.

The question as to what is the ultimate and final authority in matters moral and religious is always interesting. Where is the seat of authority in matters of religion? This is always the problem of the day. Various replies are given to the question.

Reason, says one, is the seat of final authority. May not the intellect with the various functions be relied upon to render sure judgments? One has only to recall the grotesque

fancies that have from time to time taken hold of the finest and brainiest men and led them into the grossest delusions to satisfy himself that the seat of authority does not lie in the reason. Not that we are to throw reason away in matters of religion: for while faith is ofttimes above reason, it is by no means contrary to it. Faith is opposed not to reason, but to sight. The voice of reason, however, is not to be considered final and authoritative. Reason is only one of the human faculties, and it, equally with others has been affected by sin. Then there is an objective revelation outside of reason.

Can we not depend upon *conscience,* that faculty as delicate and sensitive as the balance turned by a speck of dust, to admonish us of evil, to praise us for the good, and settle for the right and wrong of matters religious? We have but to recall into what incalculable mischief the consciences of some men have led them: Saul of Tarsus, for example—to speedily recognize that we must look elsewhere for our authority. "In all good conscience men have written deadly heresies in their books, and under the sanctions of religious conscience have performed deeds of violence and shame."

There are people who claim that the church is the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice. This is the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Called of God, divinely founded, with perpetual witnesses to the truth, with bishops and councils—surely the church is a sufficient guide. Yet what enormities have flourished under the banner of the church! So long as she is composed of fallible human beings the church can never be final and authoritative in matters of faith and practice.

On every hand we hear the cry: *"Back to Christ!"* He and He alone, we are told, is the final and ultimate author-

ity in all these matters. We certainly have no desire to take any glory away from the church's Lord and Master in order to give it to so sacred a Book even as the Bible. We are willing to go "Back to Christ!" But where shall we find Him? With the exception of a reference in Josephus and a line or two in Tacitus where, outside of the Bible, shall we find Christ? So we see that in order to get "Back to Christ" we are in duty bound to fall back upon the Scriptures. The New Testament has preserved for us the record of Christ in its completest, fullest, and purest form.

For our Master Himself the Scriptures were considered sufficient authority in matters of faith and practice. It would repay anyone to look up all the passages in which these words of the Master occur, "Is it not written," "Have ye not read?" "What saith the Scriptures?" "It is written." A careful study of such scripture references will reveal the fact that Christ referred to the Scriptures as the authority which settled matters of faith and practice for Him. Should the Bible be less to the church than it was to the church's Master? We think not.

A Roman Catholic priest on being asked to prove that the church, i. e., the Roman Catholic Church, is the final authority, referred the inquirer to Matthew 16:18, 19: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," etc., saying: "There is my authority for claiming authority for my church." Do you not see the ludicrousness of his position—he had to fall back on the Scriptures for authority to prove that his church had any authority. So the Bible, in the last analysis, is the final authority.

The Bible should be approached as a spiritual book—as the Book of God for the "man of God."

"Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God * * * and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

There must needs be a *spiritual affinity* existing between the student of the Word of God and the Word itself. The Holy Spirit, who taught those holy men of old how and what to write, is the One who alone can teach men today how to read the sacred writings. He who inspired them must illumine now. The sun dial is a useful instrument, but of what use is it without the sun? So it is with the Bible: its truth cannot be seen or understood unless by the aid of the Holy Spirit. The Bible was not written for the scientist, the geologist, the anthropologist, the scholar, as such; it was written for "the man of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). And that is the reason why many a poor, illiterate "man of God" has gone clear into the kingdom of truth while many a mere scholar has been fumbling with the latch trying to get in. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matthew 11:25, 26).

Much is said today with regard to different kinds of criticism: historical, exegetical, literary, philological. They may all be well in their proper place, but they are absolutely useless and worse than useless unless they are saturated with and controlled by that *spiritual criticism* which is so necessary to qualify and control all the rest, both natural and supernatural. This is the spirit and culture that has saved the Bible.

The scholars have never saved the Bible. They never will. They have torn it to pieces, and had it not been divine and contained within it the hiding of the life of God, the old Book would have been wrecked upon the shores of scholarly destructive criticisms years ago. A little girl who had visited London was asked if she had seen any wild

beasts over there. "Yes," she replied, "I saw some in the theological gardens." Not the scholars, but the sinners and the saints have saved the Bible. They have taken its promises and stepped out upon them, and proved to the world their truth. All the science in the world has never smoothed a dying pillow or supplied a hope in death.

The Bible must be approached with a willing and obedient mind.

"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7:17).

The key to the understanding of the Scriptures lies in consecration, not scholarship; in surrender of the heart, not in genius or intellect. Pious men with no scholarship can go through the open door of truth, while scholars with no piety remain outside fumbling with the latch. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:25-27).

This is not belittling scholarship. We believe in scholarship, for we need it, and all we can get of it. Scholarship has many advantages. Given two men equally consecrated, the one ignorant and the other learned, and it is clearly evident that the learned will get more out of the Scriptures than the ignorant. We are not belittling scholarship, but just putting it where it belongs—in a subordinate place. We are putting first things first, and giving the primary and supreme place to obedient faith. The assertion that academic training is absolutely necessary to the understanding

of the Scriptures must be stoutly resisted with all one's might and main. Scholarship is a good deal, but it is not everything; nor does it accomplish the greatest things in the world. The realm of the moral and spiritual is vastly superior to that of the intellectual. It is Coleridge who says that all the mere products of the understanding tend to death. Faith men are greater than science men. Divinity is more important than philosophy, as heaven is more than earth, the soul than the body, the body than raiment, eternity than time. Let us put first things first. A big heart is better than a big head, and a great soul is of more importance than a great mind, that is, if they are to be measured, weighed, and compared. Knowledge shall pass away; love abideth forever.

We should not approach the Bible then—at least not primarily—with the question, How much of this can I understand? but, How much of it am I willing to obey? The doors of the kingdom of truth swing on the hinges of obedience. All spiritual knowledge is in order to obedience. The law of the acquisition of spiritual knowledge is obedience. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). Human teaching says, "Know first, then do." Divine teaching says, "Do first, then you will know."

The Bible is not a cabalistic Book. Its secrets are not reserved only for the intellectually initiated. The Bible is an open Book. Jesus said, "In secret have I said nothing." He who runs may read.

The dictionary is no substitute for the Bible, nor the lexicographer for the Holy Spirit. Etymology and syntax are not to take the place of spiritual illumination. The language of the Bible is the speech of Canaan, not of

Egypt or Babylon. Only the chosen ones can say "Shibboleth"; the rest say "Sibboleth." Their speech betrayeth them that they are not "of this Way."

What the Persian Magi could not find out with the accumulated wisdom of the centuries the priests of God could tell them in a moment (Matthew 2:1-8). "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:98-100). "Days should speak," it is true, and "multitude of years should teach wisdom"; but do they always? By no means. "Great men are not always wise"; nor are gray hairs always an indication of wisdom. "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (cf. Job 32:7-9). God ofttimes "taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Corinthians 3:19). "The world by wisdom knew not God." We are saved by faith, not by scholarship (1 Corinthians 1:21). Not the clever, but the contrite are saved. It was by "foolishness," not by "wisdom" that God saved the world (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Obedience is the key to the understanding of the Bible: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3). The Holy Spirit is given to them that obey Him (Acts 5:32). Truth is ofttimes hidden or concealed from those who are not willing to obey; hence the parabolic form of teaching used by the Master (cf. Matthew 13:10-15).

The fourfold requirement for a knowledge of the Scriptures is a pure heart, a simple faith, a surrendered will, and

an obedient spirit. Such prerequisites are within the reach of the simplest and most humble child of God.

Resolve to conform your life to the teachings of the Scriptures as you learn them. The declared purpose of the Bible is to make bad men good; good men better; better men the best it is possible for them to be. The Scriptures purport to make ungodly men holy, holy men holier, and saints of all who believe. It is a Book of God for the man of God—to thoroughly furnish him unto all good works. To surrender the heart and life to its doctrines and precepts —this is to understand the Bible.

The study of the Bible in order to enforce its doctrines or to be able to defend its teachings, essential as such study seems to be, will not yield the best results. A study of the Bible for the purpose of obedience yields the greatest fruit. Do not find fault with the Bible because it shows you your faults, as the woman who smashed the mirror because it showed her that she had freckles. The Bible is a discoverer of faults and a revealer of virtues.

The Bible was written for the purpose of helping men in character building: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The Law of Truth, as every other law, demands conformity to its requirements if its secret and power are to be obtained.

Objections to the reliability of the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God.

Frequently the Christian hears it said that "Science is against the Bible," and that the authority and reliability of the Scriptures have been seriously attacked and affected by the "latest results of science." Soon, we are told, we

will have two Bibles: the Bible of the scientist and scholar, and the Bible of the saint. Among some of the Bible narratives which science is declared to have injured the authority and reliability may be mentioned two: the incident of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, and the narrative of Jonah and the whale. Let us take a look at these two narratives and see if they actually are a stumbling-block to unique claims of the Bible.

Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still

This incident in the sacred Scriptures has been cited as a scientific objection to the authority and integrity of the Word of God. It has been cited as a proof that the Bible is not a reliable revelation; it speaks of the sun and moon standing still, whereas the sun and moon do not move at all, the earth revolves around them.

The Bible in describing scientific facts uses the language of appearances rather than accuracy, just as we do in this advanced, scientific age. Take up any daily newspaper in this twentieth century, and you will read, "The sun or the moon rises," "the sun or the moon sets," at such an hour. But does it? Is not our modern newspaper guilty of a most flagrant scientific mistake, and one which our modern scientist does not seem anxious to correct? Even in this day we speak of the "dew falling," although we know that the dew does not fall, but, on the contrary, rises. In defense of these (false) scientific statements we are told that "this is the way these things *appear* to us as we look at them, although in reality it is not so; that the language of scientific *appearance,* and not scientific accuracy, is used." Why should we not be as charitable with the Bible, then? Because the Bible in describing facts of science uses the language of appearances rather than scientific accuracy, is

it therefore "unscientific"? The Bible was not written for scientists alone, but for all kinds and conditions of people.

Did Joshua command the sun and moon to stand still in the midst of the heavens? It is to be regretted that many of those who attack certain narratives in the Bible are not more thoroughly acquainted with what the Bible actually says, and especially with the original languages in which these events were written. "It is vain," says Huxley, "to discuss a supposed coincidence or apparent contradiction between the Bible and science unless we have settled on which the Bible says on the one hand, and what science says on the other." The knowledge of four Hebrew words used in Joshua's story would help much in the understanding of that miracle. Because of such ignorance writers have given different positions to the sun at the time of Joshua's command. One so-called scholar writes, "If the expression 'above Gibeon,' be exact, then the early morning must be intended; if 'in the midst of the heaven,' then it must be the noonday." It does not seem to have occurred to this writer in what a laughable position he thus places himself in that he is thereby picturing Joshua as commanding the sun not to go down *early in the morning,* or at its height at *noon.*

The word translated "stand still" means to be *dumb,* or *silent,* to *wait,* to *rest,* to *tarry.* Thirty times in the Old Testament it is so rendered; and in no other place, save here, is it translated "stand still." The word, therefore, should be translated "tarry" or "wait."

The words "in the midst of" mean, literally, "the half of" and not the "midst" or the "middle." In more than one hundred and six cases it is so translated (cf. "one half of their beards," 2 Samuel 10:4. They could not shave off one middle, but one half).

Thus the passage in Joshua should read, "Sun, rest, wait, tarry, or be still in the *half* of the heavens." By the "half of the heavens" is meant, of course, the visible horizon—at least so the ancients, who were acquainted with the whole circle of the earth, understood it. The command of Joshua, therefore, was for the sun, which was about to go down into the invisible half of the heaven, to remain in sight.

We are told that the "sun tarried in the half of the heaven and hasted not to go down." The words "hasted not" do not mean to stand still absolutely. When we say that a man does not hasten, we do not necessarily mean that he stands still. Literally, the verses may read: "There Joshua is speaking to Jehovah, and says before the eyes of Israel, 'Sun over Gibeon, tarry; and moon in the valley of Ajalon; and the sun is tarrying, and the moon stays, till the nation is avenged of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of the upright, and the sun is tarrying in the half of the heavens, and it does not hasten to set as (or for) a complete day; and there has not been as this day before it or after it."

One has well said: "If the sun were near setting the rays would fall on Gibeon on the east, and it would continue in sight, as it does at the pole of the earth for weeks together; and there was no day like it, when, his light shining the night through, two consecutive days formed one day. The miracle remains; it was the work of Almighty God. A slight dip of the pole, or deflection of the rays of light, or ways unknown to men, might have accomplished this remarkable miracle."

Was there any sufficient reason why God should thus miraculously interpose in the behalf of Israel? We think so. Israel, for probably the first time, was confronted by the combined forces of the Ammonites and the Gibeonites,

the objects of whose worship were the sun and moon. In a sense the battle was a battle between the gods of these nations and Jehovah, the God of Israel. This being the case we can see the reason why it should be shown that day who was the true God. The gods of the Ammonites and Gibeonites were powerless before the God of Israel, and indeed were compelled to favor God's chosen people and minister to the destruction of their own deluded worshipers. The plagues of Egypt were a battle between the gods of Egypt and Jehovah, the God of Israel. Why not this battle then?

Jonah and the Whale

Objections to the reliability of the Bible revelation have been made on the ground of the unreasonableness of the story of Jonah and the whale. It is contended by some, though their number is not by far so numerous as formerly, that the record of this event is not reliable because it is impossible for a whale to swallow a man—not having a gullet large enough. Further, it is contended that no man could live in the belly of a whale for so long a time.

Since the publication of Bullen's *Cruise of the Cachalot,* in which the author describes his whaling expeditions, and declares facts concerning these sea-monsters which harmonize perfectly with the Bible story, skeptics have been compelled to swallow their own objections.

The critics of the story of Jonah based their arguments for the impossibility of a whale swallowing a man on their knowledge of the structure of a Greenland whale only, whereas we now know that there are over sixty kinds of whales. Dr. Thomas Beale, a surgeon of London, in his work entitled *Observations on the Natural History of the Spermecete Whale* (Ed. 1849, p. 294), in describing a sea-

monster of this kind says: "The throat is capacious enough to give passage to the body of a man, presenting a strong contrast to the contracted gullet of the Greenland whale."

It ought to be noted in this connection that the book of *Jonah* does not say that it was "a whale," but "a great fish," or, as the Revised Version of Matthew translates it, "a sea-monster," that swallowed the prophet. Surely if God could create a sea-monster at all, He could create one, even a whale, with a mouth and gullet large enough to swallow a man. A skeptic was once arguing against the story of Baalam's ass speaking. His friend said, "Well, if you will make an ass, I will make him talk." Ability to create carries with it the power to endow with such powers as the Creator wishes.

"There is no miracle in the fact that Jonah was swallowed by 'a great fish.' " The sea dogs which live in the Mediterranean (into which sea, by the way, Jonah was cast) can easily swallow a man, or even a larger object; and they swallow their food without chewing it. Blumenbach, the eminent German zoologist, says that a horse has been found whole in the stomach of a sea dog. Other noted naturalists, such as Lacepede, Gunther, and Bruniche, give confirmatory testimony and cite other instances.

God's Special Intervention

It is remarkable to note that the great fish was "prepared" to swallow Jonah. This word "prepared" occurs four times in Jonah, and only in three other places in the whole Bible, although the ordinary word "prepared" occurs hundreds of times. This word indicates that God *appointed in a special* way this fish to swallow Jonah, just as in the New Testament Jesus appointed a special fish to have a coin in its mouth at the appointed time and place (Matthew

17:27). In the book of Jonah God "appointed," or "prepared," four special things: "a great fish to swallow Jonah" (1:17); "a gourd * * * to come up over Jonah" (4:6); "a vehement east wind" (4:8); "a worm" to smite the gourd (4:7). These four words indicate a miraculous manifestation of God's power for a specific purpose. "That the Almighty could, if necessary, extemporize a sea-monster for the assigned purpose we should not doubt. To say that God *could not* do this is to deny God altogether; to say He *would not* do it is absurd—any one of us would do it in similar circumstances if only he had the power; to say He *did not* do it is a flagrant case of begging the question." —Anderson.

Jonah a Type of Christ

By this extraordinary occurrence Jonah became one of the most remarkable types of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be found anywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). And the one is as much a fact as the other.

The New Testament refers to Jonah as a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ; for He rose again the third day *according to the Scriptures;* and where, save in Jonah, shall we find in the Old Testament a plain and clear prophecy of His rising on the third day? It was to the "sign of the prophet Jonah" that Jesus referred. It cannot be that the greatest fact of all history—namely, the resurrection of Jesus Christ—is based upon a myth. The reality of the events of the book of Jonah are attested by the words of Jesus: "The men of Ninevah shall rise in judg-

ment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the *preaching of Jonah;* and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." It surely would have been absurd for Jesus to have compared Himself to or contrasted Himself with a myth by saying, "and, behold, a greater than a myth is here." That Jonah was a real person is clearly stated in 2 Kings 14:25, "the God of Israel * * * spoke by his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." A myth has no father or birthplace, nor does it speak.

We should remember that the preservation of Jonah alive for so long a time in the sea-monster was a miraculous event, just as the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which the story of Jonah was a type, was a miraculous display of God's power; and for this reason it was a sign to the Ninevites.

Did Jonah Actually Die?

There are those who are inclined to think that Jonah really died and was raised again from the dead, and thus was "delivered from corruption," just as Jesus died and was raised again, and saw no corruption (cf. Jonah 2:2, 6, R. V. and Hebrew). Such persons maintain that in this case Jonah was more accurately a type of Christ's *death, burial,* and *resurrection.* Even if such an interpretation be valid, the supernatural element in the story would still remain, for whether Jonah was preserved alive, or died and was raised from the dead, both actions call for a miraculous display of divine power.

The approach of the Christian to the Bible must be like the approach of the Christian's Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

It surely should go without controversy that what was sufficient for the Master ought to be sufficient for the Church. The attitude of the Redeemer is worthy of imitation by the redeemed. What was the attitude of Christ towards the Scriptures? How did the Saviour regard the Word of God? If we can settle this question, we have settled the attitude of the Christian towards it.

First of all, it is clear from the words of Jesus that He accepted the narratives and events He referred to *as being historical and true.* He refers to the story of Creation, the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve (cf. Matthew 19:3-6 with Genesis 2:24); the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and Lot's wife (Luke 17:26-33), for example, as being facts and occurrences of actual history. These were not myths or allegories to the great Teacher sent from God—to Him who was and is "the wisdom of God." Critics may say that Jesus accepted the current views of His time regarding these things, which is virtually saying that He did not know any better. If so, then what becomes of His being the Truth, or of being omniscient, and of knowing all things? If He did not know these things how can we depend on His word with reference to deeper things, those things which pertain to the spiritual and eternal interests? Surely no *kenotic* theory of self-emptying must be held that robs Christ of His place as the infallible Teacher. Jesus put the stamp of His approval on these things—and, strange to say, they are the very things which destructive criticism says are myths—as being historical and true. If these things were sufficient for the Master, are they not sufficient for the Church? We think so.

In the second place, it is worthy of note that *Jesus Christ accepted the Scriptures as the inspired and authoritative Word of God.* He claimed that David "spake in (or by)

the Spirit" (Matthew 22:43). He calls the Scriptures "the Word of God" as contrasted with the traditions of men: "Making void the word of God through your tradition" (Mark 7:13).

In matters of *doctrine* Jesus appealed to the Bible as being final and authoritative. When the question of divorce and its grounds came up for settlement (Mark 10:2-12), was it not to the Word of God as found in Genesis 2 that Jesus referred them for the solution of the problem? When the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection, would trap Him by putting hard questions regarding the future life (Luke 20:27-40), did He not again refer them to what was said to Moses at the bush (Exodus 3:6) as a direct and authoritative answer to their skepticism? When the Pharisees cavilled about His deity (Matthew 22:42-45), to what did He refer them for a conclusive answer? Was it not to the Psalms (110:1)?

The same is true also with reference to matters of *duty*. Three times in the temptation in the wilderness Jesus used "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" to ward off the attacks of Satan. "It is written," and "It is written again," and still once more "It is written." These are Christ's answers; not eloquent and original, as unique sparks from the divine anvil such as could come from no son of man, but quotations from the Bible which anyone can use. Can we do better in meeting the temptations of life? We see here, surely, Christ's own estimate of the Scriptures. Again and again, when He was appealed to to settle some debatable question of conduct, He replied, "What saith the Scripture?" "Have ye not read?" "Go and read what that meaneth." Frequently He appeals to the Scriptures as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures."

It is exceedingly important for us to understand this phase of the subject in this day when so much is made of the *inner light* as compared with the *objective revelation* —the sacred Scriptures. Surely Jesus had the "inner light" more than we all, did He not? Yet, when it came to matters of faith and practice, He referred to an objective revelation —the Word of God as the final authority.

In view of all this it ought to be beyond all controversy to maintain that the attitude of the Christian towards the Bible ought to be like to that of his Master.

*We may be sure that the Bible as we have it today is substantially the same as it left the hands of the inspired writers.**

The Bible, as we have it today, can be traced back to its original sources. To substantiate this claim let us follow certain lines of proof.

Printed Copies

First, there is the proof from printed copies of the Bible. Printed copies of the Scriptures are extant today, dating as far back as the middle of the fifteenth century. In the library of Exeter College, Oxford, there is a copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew, dated A. D. 1488. In the Royal Library, Berlin, there is a Hebrew copy of the Old Testament, dated A. D. 1494. It was from this copy that Luther made his German translation of the Scriptures. There are extant printed copies of the New Testament in Greek, dated Basil, A. D. 1516, and edited by Erasmus; in Latin, dated A. D. 1514. These printed copies on being compared agree in the main with the printed copies of the Bible we possess in this year of our Lord 1922. Thus we prove, by a single step, the Old and the New Testaments,

*See *The Book of Books* by the author—Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago.

in the form we have them now to have existed four hundred years ago. This evidence is open to the investigation of both Christian and skeptic.

Manuscripts

But if the printed copies of the Bible take us back to the middle of the fifteenth century, the question may be asked, "What are you going to do about all the centuries between the fifteenth and the days of the apostles?" This question, difficult as it may seem, is not impossible to answer. There are manuscripts of the Scriptures which take us back to the middle of the fourth century. At the time the first printed copy of the Bible was issued there were in the possession of Christian scholars no less than two thousand such manuscripts—certainly a sufficient number to establish the integrity of the sacred text. If, which is certainly true, scholars are willing to accept ten or twenty copies at most of any classical writer as proving the genuineness and authenticity of his writings, how much more ought we to be willing to admit the same for the Scriptures, with over two thousand manuscripts! All these manuscripts, when compared, agree with the printed copies of the Scriptures which we possess today.

The question may be asked, "Why do these manuscripts date back as far only as the fourth century?" The answer may be found in the historic fact that in the year A. D. 302 the Emperor Diocletian ordered the wholesale destruction of the sacred books. Again, it should be remembered that in the year A. D. 330 the Emperor Constantine ordered a large number of copies of the sacred Scriptures to be made for use in the churches of his day. This accounts for the large number of manuscripts dating from the fourth century.

The manuscripts we are here speaking of contain, sepa-

rately, but parts of the Scriptures; when put together and compared, however, they contain the whole Bible. Indeed, some of them contain the New Testament in full. Thus we see, that, as far back as the middle of the fourth century, the same Bible as that which we have in 1922 was in existence. The Bible of the fourth and the twentieth centuries are one and the same.

Church and Apostolic Fathers

We are still, however, especially so far as the New Testament is concerned, about three or four hundred years removed from the lifetime of the writers of the New Testament. How can we bridge this gulf? Again is this task made easy by indisputable historic facts. From the time of the death of the Apostle John, about 100 A. D., until about the fourth century, there arose in the Christian church certain defenders of the truth of the Christian religion, called "Apologists." These men are known as "The Church Fathers." In their religious controversies with the enemies of Christianity, as well as in their letters of instruction to Christians and churches, they made constant use of Scripture quotations. These are called the "Quotations of the Church Fathers." These quotations were made with great exactness. Indeed many of them are given verbatim. So numerous are these quotations that, we are told, were the New Testament blotted out of existence it could be restored entire, excepting eleven verses, from the "Quotations of the Church Fathers."

Between the "Church Fathers" and the apostles themselves, however, another gap occurs which is filled in by the "Apostolic Fathers," i. e., by men who were alive before the last of the apostles passed away. Polycarp, A. D. 70-150, a disciple of the Apostle John, and Clement of

Rome, who was doubtless a companion of Paul (Philippians 4:3), were among the Apostolic Fathers. References are made to every part of the New Testament in the writings of these men. The New Testament must therefore have been in existence at the time of their writing.

Thus step by step we are able to prove that the Bible (the New Testament at least—the Old we shall consider later) as we have it today is the same as that which existed in the days of the apostles. Our faith in God's Word rests upon no cunningly devised fables; it rests upon evidence, and any earnest, seeking soul can gain access to such evidence if he so desires. An earnest, intelligent search in the public reference libraries of any of our large cities will corroborate the truth here set forth.

The Old Testament

No doubt should now be left in our minds regarding the genuineness of the New Testament. But how about the Old Testament? Is the evidence for its genuineness and authenticity as abundant and convincing? Let us see.

Christ's Testimony

Christ had the Old Testament in His possession. No one can read the Gospels carefully without being impressed with Christ's marvelous knowledge of the Old Testament. Not only in His defence during the wilderness temptation but throughout His entire career, the Master showed a remarkable familiarity with the Hebrew Scriptures.

Were these Scriptures the same as we have them today? That Christ constantly refers to the Sacred Writings, there can be no doubt. If one should go through the Gospels and mark every reference made by Christ to the Old Testament, it would be found that a very large number

of the Old Testament books were referred to and quoted by Him. Now, this being true, it is self-evident that the books quoted from were in existence in our Lord's day.

Further, it is to be noted that our Lord not only quoted largely and freely from the Old Testament Scriptures, but that He referred to the sacred volume, as a whole, as possessing the same divisions into which we divide it today —"the law, the prophets, and the psalms."

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:27 and 44).

There is no just reason to doubt that the Old Testament, as we have it today, was in existence in our Lord's day.

Testimony of Apostles

The apostles and writers of the New Testament possessed the Old Testament as we have it today. When Paul speaks of the "Scriptures" which Timothy had known from a child, he refers to the Old Testament. Peter's reference to the "Scriptures coming not in old time by the will of man," and John's allusion to "the Scriptures being fulfilled," all point to the Old Testament.

The quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament in the New are of a surprisingly large number. The direct quotations amount to 263. The allusions or references that are less direct number 376, making a total of 639. There are ninety quotations from the Pentateuch, and

references to it which amount to over one hundred. The Psalms are directly quoted from seventy-one times, references and allusions being made to them upwards of thirty times. The Prophecy of Isaiah is directly quoted from fifty-six times, and referred and alluded to forty-eight times. The Minor Prophets are quoted from and referred to about thirty times.

The Septuagint

It is very evident from the above mentioned testimony that there existed in the days of the apostles and Christ the Old Testament as we have it today. Indeed, it can be clearly proven that the Old Testament existed even before our Lord's Day. An edition of the Hebrew Scriptures translated into the Greek language and called "The Septuagint Version" was in existence two hundred and eighty-five years before our Lord's birth. According to tradition this version was translated from the Hebrew by seventy-two Jews, each of whom, in a separate cell, made a complete translation of the entire Old Testament. This translation was made in Alexandria about the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B. C. 285). There is no need at this time for a discussion of the manner in which this translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was made. It is sufficient for the present purpose to know that as far back as the year B. C. 285 there was a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures, copies of which exist today, and which, on being compared agree as to the matter, form and structure, with the last copy of the Old Testament that leaves the press this year.

From the evidence we have submitted it can truly be said that the entire Bible as we have it today is indeed and in truth the very Word of God, written by the men whose names it bears, and with the text essentially unchanged, as

genuine and authentic, as it was when it left the hands of the sacred writers.

> How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
> Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." In this day of crumbling creeds and confessions; in this day when men are not satisfied with the simple sound of the Gospel trumpet, but seek a gospel with variations; in this day when the exclamation mark of faith is being displaced by the interrogation mark of doubt and unbelief, it is a grand and glorious thing for the Christian to know that the Word of God standeth sure.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

CHAPTER THREE

GOD

To many Christians God is what He was to the Athenians: an "unknown God," a Being who is "ignorantly" worshipped (Acts 17:23). We do not know God as we may or should. It is certainly possible for us and obligatory upon us to know Him better than we do. The more intelligently we know God, the better pleasing and effective our service for Him may be, and the greater the evidence of His power and presence in our lives.

Of course no man can know God perfectly. A God capable of human comprehension would not be God. A perfect knowledge of God is not, however, necessary to be well-pleasing to Him, and to enjoy His favor and blessing. Millions of people are using and receiving untold blessings from the telephone, telegraph, and electricity who know scarcely more about these marvels of inventive genius than to take down the ear-trumpet, speak into the mouthpiece, turn the switch, press the button, or write the message. It surely is not necessary for a man to understand all the intricate mechanism of his watch in order that he may know the time. If he has sense enough to wind it up—that is sufficient. So is it with regard to our knowledge of God. Perfect knowledge is not necessary to enjoy His presence and favor and to render to Him intelligent service.

Yet there is a certain knowledge of God which is necessary in order to be saved (John 17:3; Romans 10:17), and for the continued exercise of trust and confidence in the divine dealings. "They that know thee shall put their trust in thee." "Then shall we know if we follow on to

know the Lord." We should endeavor to know as much of God as He has been pleased to reveal of Himself and purposes in nature, history, providence, and foremost and above all, in the Bible, in order that we may apprehend, to some fair degree at least and commensurate with our highest relation to Him, who and what He is, and what are His purposes for mankind and the world. Following are some of the facts every intelligent Christian should know concerning God.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is" (Hebrews 11:6).

The Scriptures do not attempt to *prove* the existence of God. It is a fact everywhere taken for granted (Genesis 1:1). It is assumed, too, that all men everywhere have a certain kind of knowledge of God, intuitive, acquired, or both. No tribe of men has as yet been discovered, no matter how low in the scale of civilization such human beings may be, that are without some knowledge of God, however crude or grotesque. Surely God has "put eternity in the heart of man." Hume, the skeptic, said one day to his friend Ferguson, "Adam, there is a God." Voltaire, the atheist, prayed to God in a thunderstorm. Even Robert G. Ingersoll, the once famous infidel, disclaimed being an atheist. He said, "I am not an atheist for I do not say there is no God; I am an agnostic—I do not know." A professed atheist, addressing a coterie of his followers, said, "I have gotten rid of the idea of a supreme Being, and *I thank God for it.*" But had he? No man can. The knowledge of God is born with him. Only God Himself could have planted in the human heart such a universal belief—and the very universality of the belief vouches for its truth.

Of course there are arguments and evidences proving (or probably setting forth) the existence of God outside of the declarations of the Bible. There is the deduction which every honest thinking man must make from a consideration of the universe, creation, nature, man, and all living creatures. *Reason* compels a man to believe that these things did not come into being of themselves. No adequate cause outside of God can account for such wondrous and superhuman effects. Romans 1:20 is exceedingly interesting reading in this connection. Who, that observes the providences round about him every day, can come to any other reasonable and satisfactory conclusion than that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends," and that there is sufficient evidence that the happenings of life are of divine permission, will, control and intelligence? Read carefully Daniel 4:35; Psalm 22:28; Acts 17:25, 28.

Conscience is an evidence of the existence of God. See Romans 2:14, 15. There is a something in man which says, "I ought," or "I ought not" to act thus under given circumstances. There is a tribunal within man which passes judgment upon all his acts, and says, "This is right," or "This is wrong"; a something which excuses or accuses, approves or condemns. Cardinal Newman said it was this "voice of God in the heart and conscience that kept him from being an atheist," that compelled belief in God. Every man knows that he is responsible to *God* and not to man for some things, and that there is a higher than human tribunal before which he stands and is daily, hourly judged. That I am responsible to a moral Governor far higher than man must be true. I am certain of it, I feel it within me. It cannot but be true. Conscience compels me to believe it. Such being the case there must be such a divine, moral Being who has the right thus to control, command,

condemn, commend, and to whom I must some day give account.

The *experiences* of man teach him that there is a God. There are events, happenings, calamities, deliverances, interferences, provisions, withholdings in human experience which cannot fairly or legitimately be traced to any other source than that of a controlling, superintending Power that is not limited and human, but divine and supreme. Compare Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 31:15; 75:7. "Surely, O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "A man's goings are of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:24). "A man's heart deviseth his way, but Jehovah directeth his steps" (16:9).

Intelligent *observation* of nature and life, setting forth as they do the great fact of intelligent design and purpose in all things, should lead the thoughtful and reverent observer and student inevitably to faith in a personal God, a supreme divine Intelligence. "Belief in a personal self-existent God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature. . . . . Atheism leaves all these matters without an explanation, and makes, not history alone, but our intellectual and moral nature itself, an imposture and a lie."—Patton. Belief in God is a key that fits all the wards of the lock of life, therefore we know that we have the right key.

No one but a "fool" (Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:22), the grossly immoral or the intellectually biased (Romans 1:18-32) will deny the existence of a personal, intelligent, moral and supreme Being—God. As someone has well said: "What! no God? A watch, and no key for it? A watch with a mainspring broken, and no jeweler to fix it? A watch, and no repair shop? A time-card and a train, and nobody to run it? A star lit, and nobody to pour oil in to

keep the wick burning? Flowers, and no florist? Conditions, and no conditioner?" He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh at such absurd atheism.

THE NATURE AND BEING OF GOD

"*God is* (*a*) *Spirit.*"

"God is spirit" (John 4:24, R. V., margin). "A spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39).

The idea that God has a body with parts and passions like a man is excluded by these words of Jesus. The scriptural statement that man was made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26) does not refer to physical but to moral and spiritual qualities and likeness (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10).

God cannot be located in any one place on the earth to the exclusion of another. The mistake the Jew, Samaritan, and Greek made was to suppose that God could thus be located (John 4:19-24; Acts 7:47-49; 17:24, 29).

No one knows how God looks, nor can human imagination conceive of His appearance. For this reason the Israelites were forbidden to make idols resembling God (Deuteronomy 4:15-17; Isaiah 40:25). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18), nor hath any "beheld his form" (John 5:37; Deuteronomy 4:15). Manifestations of God men, like Moses and the seventy elders, have seen, but God, as He really is and in His true essence, no one has ever seen (Exodus 24:10; 33:18-23). Manifestations of God in visible form are recorded in the Bible (Genesis 16:7, 10, 13; 18:1-10; 22:11; Exodus 13:21 with 14:19; Judges 13:18 with Isaiah 9:6) in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament God revealed Himself in Christ (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).

God is not only *a* Spirit, He is *the* Spirit, "the Father of

our spirits" (Hebrews 12:9; Acts 17:28), the self-existent "I AM" (Exodus 3:14), and the Source of all life (John 5:26).

God is a Person.

"Jehovah is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King" (Jeremiah 10:10).

The fact that God is a Person closely follows that of His being Spirit. It is erroneous to picture, describe or think of God as an impersonal force or principle, even though you spell these words in capitals. It is equally erroneous to identify God with truth, goodness, mind, as though he were such at the expense of having any existence separate from these abstract qualities. Such a pantheistic idea lies at the root of the fundamental error of Christian Science respecting the doctrine of the personality of God. In Eddyism "God is Principle, not Person."

It is the clear teaching of the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments that God is a Person clearly distinct from nature and man. God is differentiated from idols and is called the "living" God in contradistinction to images. God is One who sees, feels, hears, sympathizes, hates and loves. He may be angered, grieved, or sinned against. He is the Creator of all things animate and inanimate. He is constantly active in the welfare of His creatures. See Jeremiah 10:3-16; Acts 14:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Psalms 94:9, 10; Genesis 6:6; 1 Kings 11:9; Deuteronomy 6:15; Proverbs 6:16; Revelation 3:19.

Personality, as used in this connection, does not necessarily include substance as we understand that word. It does, however, stand for intelligence, will, self-consciousness, self-determination, reason, mind, and individuality. All these attributes of personality God possesses, and is the source of them in His creatures.

How cold, formal, uninviting is the impersonal abstraction that pantheistic religions, like Christian Science, would put up before us, label God, and call upon us to worship! What inducement is there to pray to so impersonal a being? Why take down the telephone to talk if you know that there is no one at the other end of the line to listen? How full of comfort is the thought of prayer and fellowship with God if, according to the Christian conception of God as a Person, loving, kind, thoughtful, actively interested in his people, listening to catch the faintest breath of prayer, we are assured that "He is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "Speak to Him, O soul of mine, for He listens, and spirit with Spirit can meet. Nearer is He than breathing, and closer than hands and feet." Such a God is our God.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God is Omnipotent—All-powerful.

"I know that thou canst do everything" (Job 42:2). "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Nothing is beyond the reach of the power of God. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). All created things are the work of His great might (Genesis 1:1). The storm and the calm of the sea are of His working (Psalm 107:25-29). Earthquake, hurricane, fire are obedient to His word and will (Nahum 1:5, 6). Everything in heaven—angels, principalities and powers are subject to his direction and under his absolute control (Daniel 4:35; Hebrews 1:14). Even the activities of Satan are limited by the dictates of His wise and holy will (Job 1:12; 2:6; Luke 22:31, 32; Revelation 20:2). The ways and actions of mankind are not beyond the power of God to control as the experience of Pharaoh (Exodus 14), Nebu-

chadnezzar (Daniel 4), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9) and mankind as a whole (James 4:13-15; Luke 12:16-21) clearly show.

We should not wonder then that men who have caught the vision of God as the Almighty, wonder-working, omnipotent, all-powerful God have been able to do exploits for Him—such men as Moses before Pharaoh, Joshua before Jericho, Elijah before Ahab, and the illustrious saints portrayed in that wonderful roll of honor in Hebrews 11. Why then should we be weak when with us is prayer and with God is power—power equal to that which raised Jesus Christ from the tomb in Joseph's garden (Ephesians 1:19-22; Philippians 3:10)? We are straightened in ourselves, not in God. If such a God be for us, as He is, who then can be against us? "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerrubabel, my servant, thou shalt become a plain." And all this "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord God." If we exercise faith in so mighty a God (James 1:6; Mark 11:23) then nothing (that is according to His declared will and which we are called upon in the divine Word to do) will be impossible of accomplishment. Plan big things, mighty ventures for God. Attempt the humanly impossible for Him. God loves to have His people put His power to the test (Malachi 3:10; Haggai 2:15-19; 2 Kings 3:13-20; Ephesians 3:20). All power in heaven and in earth belongs to God—go therefore and do mighty things for Him.

God knows all things—He is Omniscient.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33).

Nothing, open or secret, is hidden from God (Hebrews 4:13). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping

watch upon the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). All "the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (5:21). No thought, plan, scheme, purpose, or secret of man is hidden from God (Amos 4:13). From each other we may hide, but not from God. How wonderfully the truth of the all-pervading knowledge of God is set forth in Psalm 139. "Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 32:19). How otherwise could God reward the righteous and punish the wicked?

How minute is God's knowledge of nature! The names and number of the stars are known to Him (Psalm 147:4; Genesis 15:5). What a majestic portrayal of God's knowledge of the things of nature we have in Job, chapters 38-42, especially 38:3, 4, 12, 19, 33, 37; 39:1, 2.

In *history* nothing occurs with which God is not already cognizant. In Daniel, chapters 2, 4 and 8, in a striking way we have depicted the history of nations for centuries to come. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the ages" (Acts 15:18).

God is never surprised at what happens. There is no past and future with Him. All time is one eternal present. We see but a day at a time. God sees the end from the beginning and all that lies between (Isaiah 48:5-8; 46:9, 10; Acts 15:18). On the desk lie two calendars: one is composed of 365 sheets and displays but one day at a time; the other consists of but one sheet, but thereon may be found the exact day of the week, for example, on which any day occurred for 100 years backwards or forwards. Our calendar is a daily, yea, hourly one; God's calendar is eternal.

Not one thing occurs in the *history of mankind* as a whole or pertaining to any single individual but what God knows.

He knew the afflictions through which His chosen people were passing (Exodus 3:7). He well knew what stand Pharaoh would take (3:19). What intimate knowledge of individual action is portrayed in Psalm 139! He knows it all (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19).

How heartsearching, and yet how comforting, too, is the thought of the omniscience of God! How careful we should be as to the nature of the thoughts, plans, purposes we allow to lodge in our minds and hearts! How careful regarding the things done in secret, the things we may be tempted to do in the dark and in the chambers of our imagery (Ezekiel 8:12) when we are prone to think we are unobserved!

What comfort to know that God is willing to bestow this "wisdom which is from above" upon his creatures (James 1:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Kings 3:9-12)! How sweet to read the "I know" so oft repeated in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15), even though sometimes it be the "I know" of rebuke. To be assured that God knows our trials, suffering, temptations, patience under great stress, as well as our victories, good and brave deeds, is indeed a great encouragement. Too often our friends see only our failure; they do not know how hard we tried to win. God knows! God sees! God cares!

God is Omnipresent—He is everywhere.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psalm 139:7). "Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him, saith Jehovah?" (Jeremiah 23:24).

There is no place in heaven, sky, earth, sea, yea, even hell, where it can be said, "God is not" (Psalm 139:7-12; Job 26:11-12; Jonah 2:2). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good."

No man can, as those false prophets so erroneously supposed (Jeremiah 23:24), hide himself in any place so that God will not see him. God can see idols even in the heart (Ezekiel 14:7), or that are worshipped under ground (8:5-18), as well as the sin which is patent to every eye (Romans 1:22-25).

Yet, while God is everywhere present, He is not thus present in the same sense. Such a belief would be pantheistic, and, of course, erroneous. God is in heaven, for example, in a special sense, in a sense that He is not elsewhere—heaven is His "dwelling-place" (1 Kings 8:30, 49; Matthew 6:9; 7:11). Yet God is everywhere—everywhere actively interested in the welfare of His people and in the carrying out of His redemptive purposes.

Does God see what a man does in secret? Is the divine eye an eternal detective? Then how careful should we be in all manner of living! When tempted to sin in secret we should remember that "Thou God seest me," and say, "How can I sin, and do this evil *in thy sight?*" (Psalm 51:4).

Yet, notwithstanding, what a blessing to know that God is always near; that He is not so far off as even to be nigh; that He is within; closer than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet. "I know not where His islands lift their fronded palms in air; I only know I cannot drift beyond His love and care." "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

God is Immutable, Eternal—He is unchangeable.

"I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). "For I, Jehovah, change not" (Malachi 3:6).

God is without beginning or end. There never was a time when God was not; there will never be a time when He will cease to be. He is the eternal "I AM"—the eternal

past, present and future of all existence, the everlasting God (Isaiah 40:28; 57:15; Psalm 90:2; Deuteronomy 33:27).

What a comfort for the believer to know that he is a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4); that the life of God is his life (John 5:24-29); that he abides even as God abides (1 John 2:17).

God is unchangeable in His nature (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; 1 Samuel 15:29; Psalm 102:24-27). The divine mind never changes. God does not think about one thing in a certain manner one day, and the next day in a different manner. True, we are told in the Scriptures that God "repents," (Genesis 6:6; Jonah 3:10), but by such an expression we are to understand not a change in the divine purpose, but a change in the divine *dealings* with mankind in so far as man changes from sin to righteousness or vice versa. Divine repentance, therefore, is the same principle in the divine character acting differently under altered circumstances. The divine *mind* and *character* never change—they are always the same in their attitude towards the righteous and the sinner. God's *dealings* with men do change from time to time even as they change in their conduct. Such must inevitably be the case, seeing God is absolutely holy and righteous. "When a man, bicycling against the wind, turns about and goes with the wind instead of going against it, the wind seems to change, although it is blowing just as it was before."

How grand it is to feel that there is One who never fails, changes, or disappoints us! "Change and decay in all around I see"—yes, but not "above," not in God. His word and promise may be absolutely depended upon. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it; hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" My soul, hast thou cast thine all upon the word and promise of God for forgiveness, pardon, peace,

eternal life? Then thou shalt not be disappointed. "Heaven and earth may pass away"; but not one word of God shall fail—all shall come to pass.

God is Holy.

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

If any distinction at all can be made between the attributes of God—whether omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, etc.—the divine holiness is the one attribute which God would have His people think of as standing out above all the others. Such was the revelation of God received by Moses (Exodus 34:6-9), Job (42:1-3), and Isaiah (6:1-10). About thirty times in the prophecy of Isaiah is God called "the Holy One." As in a photograph that which we desire to see is not the hands or feet but the face, so in God, that which we should desire to see more than the divine power and knowledge is the divine holiness. Only thus shall we be able to see sin in its blackness and awfulness, the need and necessity of atonement, and the wondrous grace of God in providing a way of life for sinful men.

When we speak of the holiness of God we mean the consummate and perfect purity and absolute spotlessness and sanctity of the divine nature; that God is immaculately pure and free from all impurity and iniquity both in Himself and in His dealings with men. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13).

The divine holiness manifests itself in God's actions and dealings. God cannot do wrong, nor can He act unjustly. "Be it far from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity" (Job

34:10). However much Job may have thought that he was being unfairly dealt with, such a conclusion was nevertheless false. However hidden and mysterious God's dealings with us may be they are always right and just. Being holy God must, of course, punish sin and reward righteousness (Proverbs 15:9, 26). He is the uncompromising foe of sin. So much does God hate sin and desire to deliver His people from its guilt, tyranny and power that He has given His only-begotten Son to redeem us from all iniquity (2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 3:24-26).

In like manner God loves and rewards the righteous, for He loves holiness in His creatures (Hebrews 1:9), and has sacrificed greatly to bring about such qualities in them (John 17:11; Leviticus 11:43-45).

The doctrine of the divine holiness makes certain demands upon us. Every child of God should make it his constant aim to be holy even as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15, 16). Human holiness is, of course, relative, not absolute. We are to remember that an unholy act interrupts our fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7), during which time there can be no assurance of answered prayer (Isaiah 59:1, 2). Hypocrisy in our approach to God is condemned by His holiness (Matthew 6:1-7). If we know that God is holy and demands holiness of His creatures then we are under serious obligation to put away all unholy thoughts and deeds (Matthew 5:22-24). "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Without such holiness of heart and life no man shall stand at last in the presence of God (Hebrews 12:14). Such a vision of God and His holiness will awaken within us a sense of our own sin and unworthiness. We will not be claiming sinless perfection. There will be, on the con-

trary, a growing sense of our own sin and worthlessness (1 John 1:7, 8, 10). There will also be a feeling and attitude of reverence in our approach to and our behavior in the house of God (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7; Exodus 3:5; Isaiah 6:1-3).

God is Loving, Merciful and Gracious.

"God is love" (1 John 4:8). "A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth" (Exodus 34:6).

"God is love," as He is "light" (1 John 1:5) and "Spirit" (John 4:24). These three words are wonderfully illustrative of the divine nature and being. Love is difficult if not impossible to define. From certain scriptures, however, we may infer that the love of God betokens a constant and solicitous interest in the physical, moral and spiritual wellbeing of His creatures, such as leads Him to make sacrifices beyond human comprehension in order to manifest that love (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8). The supreme manifestation of God's love to man lies in the gift of His only-begotten Son to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 4:9, 10). The cross of Christ is the highest expression of the love of a holy God providing an atonement for the sins of a guilty and lost world. It is because of the love of God that pardon and forgiveness are possible. " 'Twas love that drew salvation's plan; 'twas love that brought it down to man; O, the mighty gulf that God did span—on Calvary!" "But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption" (Isaiah 38:17, compare Ephesians 2:4, 5). Making "sons of God" (1 John 3:1, 2) of those who formerly were rebels (Romans 5:10), and constantly remembering His people throughout all the

varying circumstances of life (Isaiah 63:7; 49:10-16) are evidences of God's great love for man.

From the love of God springs His *mercy* and *loving-kindness* to undeserving sinners (Exodus 34:6; Isaiah 30:18). God waits to be gracious to the unkind, unworthy, and ungrateful (Matthew 5:45). It is because of the mercy and longsuffering of God that sinners are not long ago destroyed (2 Peter 3:9). The whole scheme of our redemption and its carrying out in fact springs from the matchless and unmerited mercy and favor of God (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

The Justice of God.

"The Lord is righteous" (Psalm 116:5). "God is * * * just" (1 John 1:9).

In a sense God's justice is a necessary outcome of His holiness, not as it is in itself so much as pertaining to its manifestation in the divine dealings with mankind. Holiness has to do more particularly with the character of God himself; justice with that character as expressed in God's dealings with men.

The justice and righteousness of God manifests itself in the making and imposing on mankind of just and holy laws, in the executing of penalties for any infringement of those laws, and in the actual carrying out of the holy and divine purposes in the government of the universe. The justice of God is free from all caprice or passion, and is vindicative not vindictive.

This attribute of God assures us that God is not "too good" to punish sin. The fate of fallen angels, of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the antediluvians is sufficient proof of this statement (Jude 5-16). God will assuredly punish the wicked (Psalm 11:4-7) and reward the righteous (1 John 1:9). The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15)

cannot, by any fair interpretation, be made to teach that God is too good to punish sin. This parable does not cover the whole of the plan of salvation, indeed it is a real question whether it has anything to do with salvation at all. Certainly, even while setting forth the divine mind and attitude towards a returning sinner, it has nothing to say as to the cost or method of providing pardon for the erring. The parable was spoken to show the scribes and Pharisees, who were murmuring because Christ was receiving sinners, that they ought to be rejoicing rather (Luke 15:1, 2, 32). We should not press parables too far, certainly not beyond the point of meaning indicated in the text or context.

Summing up then the things every Christian should believe about God we would say, first, that, as to the existence of God, he must believe that He actually exists, that God is a real entity; second, as to His nature, he must believe that He is Spirit and a Person; and third, he must believe that God is all-powerful, all-seeing, all-wise, everywhere present, eternal, unchangeable, holy, loving, merciful, gracious, and just. Such a God is our God, so worthy of our supreme trust and confidence. How rich is our heritage in God!

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is Christianity, for Christianity is primarily and fundamentally not a creed or set of doctrines but a Person. A Christian is not one who accepts a certain formula of accepted truth so much as one who actually accepts the personal Christ as Saviour and Lord. There can be no Christianity without Christ. "If you take away the name of Buddha from Buddhism and remove the personal revealer entirely from his system; if you take away the personality of Mahomet from Mohammedanism, or the personality of Zoroaster from the religion of the Parsees, the entire doctrine of these religions would still be left intact. Their practical value, such as it is, would not be imperilled or lessened. But take away from Christianity the name and person of Jesus Christ and what have you left? Nothing! The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centers in Jesus Christ. Without Him there is absolutely nothing"—Sinclair Paterson. "From beginning to end, in all its various aspects and phases and elements, the Christian faith and life is determined by the person and the work of Jesus Christ. It owes its life and character at every point to Him. Its convictions are convictions about Him. Its hopes are hopes which He has inspired and which it is for Him to fulfill. Its ideals are born of His teaching and life. Its strength is the strength of His spirit"—Denney.

The importance of having right views concerning Jesus Christ is very evident, therefore, when viewed from the standpoint of the important place He holds in the religion

which bears His name. We cannot be right in the rest unless we think rightly of Him. Names and sects and parties fall, but Jesus Christ is all in all. Our eternal salvation depends upon what we think of Him and what relation we sustain to Him (John 8:21, 24; 17:3). Let us therefore seek to understand the things we should know about Him in order to be saved, to walk worthy of Him, and to serve Him acceptably.

Let us consider Jesus Christ from the standpoint of His Person and then of His Work.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

The Humanity of Jesus Christ. He was a true man.

"The man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). "Behold the man!" (John 19:5).

Jesus Christ came into the world as other children do—over the ever thorny way of a woman's pain and sorrow. He was "born of the Virgin Mary" (Matthew 1:18; 2:11; Luke 1:34, 35). He was "made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). In thus being born of a woman Jesus Christ submitted to the conditions of a human life and a human body. He became humanity's son by a human birth. He was named "Jesus" (Matthew 1:21); "Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 2:22) and Son of man over eighty times. He is "the man, Christ Jesus."

Of course there is a *great mystery* connected with the birth of Christ into this world. The manner of His entrance into the human race was "on this wise" (Matthew 1:18), that is to say, it was different from the long lists of births that are named before it. It was not ordinary, but extraordinary and supernatural. Jesus Christ had no earthly father. Joseph was His "supposed" father (Luke 3:23). The doctrine of the Virgin Birth need not stag-

ger us. We are totally unable to unravel the mystery of our own birth, how much less that of the entrance of Deity into humanity. The story of the supernatural entrance of Christ into the world is in harmony with the supernatural life He lived (John 8:46) and with His miraculous exit from the world (Acts 1:9). No laws of heredity are sufficient to account for His generation. By a creative act God broke through the chain of human generation and brought into the world a supernatural being.

Jesus Christ was *subject to the same sinless infirmities as other men.* As a child He grew as other children grow (Luke 2:40, 46, 52). He learned the things of God as other children learn them, by the teaching of his parents, and by His faithful attendance upon the services of the house of God (Luke 2:41, 52; 4:16). Just to what extent the sinless nature of Christ and His Deity influenced such growth and progress we may not be able exactly to say, but we do know that "Jesus grew, and increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." The self-emptying, while not consisting of the emptying of His Deity, yet surely had reference to some voluntary self-limiting which affected His humanity. Is it incredible to think that, although possessing the divine attributes, He should have held them in subjection in order that the Holy Spirit might have His part to play in that truly human and yet perfectly divine life (see Acts 10:38)?

Jesus suffered from hunger and thirst (Matthew 4:2; John 19:28); He was subject to human weariness, and slept (John 4:6; Matthew 8:24). He endured and suffered bodily pain, even unto death, as other human beings (Luke 23; John 19). He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Even from

the standpoint of His purely human nature he was sinless and He found it impossible to yield to sin. Yet "He suffered, being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). The "temptation," not only in the wilderness but all through His earthly life (Luke 4:13), was no sham or farce. It was a real temptation, causing the Son of man suffering. It is not he who yields to the temptation who suffers, but he who fights and overcomes. It is remarkable to note this fact.

Jesus Christ had every *appearance of a man* (John 4:9; Luke 24:13, 18; John 20:15). To the woman of Samaria, as well as to Mary Magdalene and the disciples on the way to Emmaus and out on the sea toiling fruitlessly all night, Jesus had all the appearance of a real man. He was "flesh and blood" (Hebrews 2:14), was "made flesh" (John 1:14), possessed a "body" (Matthew 26:12), "soul" (26:38) and "spirit" (Luke 23:46); He had "hands and feet" (24:39).

By his incarnation Jesus Christ came into possession of a real human nature. He came not only unto His own, but came unto them in the likeness of their own flesh. Of course we must carefully distinguish between a human nature and a carnal nature. Christ's human nature was truly human but sinless—"apart from sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He was *a* son of man, but also THE Son of man.

What a comfort to us to know that He who was actual God was in reality human, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same" (Hebrews 2:14). There is not a note in the great organ of our humanity which, when touched, does not find a sympathetic response in the mighty range and scope of the Saviour's being, except, of course, the jarring discord of sin. Are we hungry, thirsty, weary, disappointed,

misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, beaten, betrayed? So was He, and in a far deeper sense than we can ever be. We have not yet "resisted unto blood." But He did, and that for our sakes. And it is this very Son of man, this One, who for us men and our salvation became man, who is to be our judge in that great day. How safe will be our interests in His hands! He has been appointed Judge "because He is the Son of man," because He fully understands all our trials and temptations, for He himself has "suffered being tempted."

THE DEITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was not only true man but God also. He was both divine and human; fully man, fully God. In Jesus of Nazareth dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). He was not merely "godlike"; He was actually God. His name was "Immanuel," which means, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

The Scriptures assert that Jesus Christ is God.

"The Word was God" (John 1:1). "The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Over and over again in the Scriptures the name *"God"* is ascribed to Christ. "The Word was God." "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever" (Hebrews 1:8). In John 1:18, R. V., margin, He is called "the only begotten God." "We know the Son of God . . . . even his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God" (1 John 5:20). We are aware that it is argued that absolute Deity is not hereby proven, for human judges are "called gods" (John 10:35). True, but such are called "gods" in the relative sense, never in the absolute sense as in the references to Jesus Christ. The word of Thomas, "My

Lord, and my God," are not to be considered a mere expression of amazement, but a confession of faith—a confession which Jesus positively accepted as being absolutely true, as His words which follow clearly show.

Other divine names are ascribed to Christ.

He is called *"the Son of God."* Too numerous to record here are the scriptures referring to this fact. A few chosen passages are Matthew 16:16, 17; 8:29; 14:33; Mark 1:1; 14:61; Luke 1:35; 4:41. This title was not only claimed for Him by others, but by Jesus Himself (Matthew 27:40, 43: "For he said, I am the Son of God." See also Mark 14:61, 62; Luke 22:70). Without any equivocation Jesus openly announces Himself as such (John 5:25; 10:36; 11:4). Three times in the Gospels the Jews attempted to kill Christ, and in each instance it was because He claimed Deity (John 5:18; 8:59; 19:7). Indeed it was for just such a claim that they finally slew Him (Matthew 26:62-66).

By the title *"Son of God"* a unique relation to God was clearly intended: "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18, R. V.). The Jews would not stone one of their number simply for claiming that he was a son of God, for every Jew acknowledged that God was his Father. The claim Jesus here made was much more than that; it was unique; it was a claim that no mere human being had a right to make, a claim which in itself constituted blasphemy: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (10:33). The uniqueness of Christ's claim is indicated by the word "own" ("his *own* Father," R. V.).

It is totally fallacious and altogether contrary to true

doctrine to say that Jesus Christ was a son of God in the sense that all men are sons of God, only, of course, that He was much more God-like than any other of the sons of men. Scripture calls Him the *"only-begotten* Son of God (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, e. g.). The term *"only-begotten"* means "the only one" (cf. Luke 7:12—"The only son of his mother"; 9:38—"For he is mine only child"; Mark 12:6—"Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved"). Note the contrast between the "many children of God" and "the only-begotten Son of God" in John 1:12 and 18. We "become" sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ never "became" but always "was" the Son of God. We become children of God in time; He is Son of God from all eternity. He is Son of God by nature; we, by grace and adoption.

Jesus Christ is called *"Lord"* also (John 20:28; Luke 2:11; Acts 4:33). True, this title is used of the apostles (Acts 16:30; John 12:21), but it is never used of men with the definite article ("the Lord"). It is remarkable, too, to note that the translators of the Septuagint, when they came to the Hebrew word indicating Jehovah, translated it "Lord" (kurios), which always refers to that ineffable name of the divine Being (Jehovah) which because of their reverence, they were afraid to write and pronounce. When therefore Jesus Christ is called "Lord" it is a clear testimony to the fact that He is Deity, equal with Jehovah.

Such divine names as *"First and Last"* (Revelation 22:13, compared with Isaiah 44:6, where it is the name of Jehovah); *"Alpha and Omega"* (Revelation 22:13, compared with 1:8, where it is the name of "the Lord God Almighty"); *"the Holy One"* (Acts 3:14, compared with Isaiah 43:3, and over a score of times in that prophecy, in which Jehovah Himself is called "the Holy One").

Some twelve or more other divine names are ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures, which we have not space here to treat. The names we have dealt with, however, are sufficient to prove that Jesus Christ is Deity, viewed from the standpoint of divine names and titles.

Jesus Christ is to be worshipped even as God is worshipped.

"That all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John 5:23). "Let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:6).

Robert Browning quoted, in a letter to a lady in her last illness, the words of Charles Lamb, when in a gay fancy with some friends as to how he and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more—on the first suggestion, and "if Christ entered this room?" changed his tone at once, and stuttered out as his manner was when moved: "You see—if Shakespeare entered we should all rise; if Christ appeared, we must all kneel."

Deity, God alone, is to be worshipped. If then it is proper to render worship to Jesus Christ He must be God. It is not enough to admire Christ; He demands, and the Father demands for Him, the worship of men and angels. God hath "highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:9, 10). But such homage would be a sacrilege if Christ were not God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only" (Matthew 4:10).

Jesus accepted such worship as being properly due Him (John 20:28; Luke 5:8; 24:52; Matthew 8:2). It is worthy of note that the apostles refused such worship (Acts 14:14, 15; 10:25, 26). Even angels refused to permit men to worship them (Revelation 22:8, 9). Who then was Christ, if not God, to unhesitatingly accept the

worship of men as His proper due? Jesus Christ was either God, or He was an impostor. But His whole life refutes the idea of imposture. As Stephen (Acts 7:59) and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:8-10) and the early Christians (1 Corinthians 1:2) called upon the Lord Jesus in prayer and worship so should we. Let us not commit the awful sin of refusing to offer to Christ that which is His due (Psalm 2:12).

Attributes which belong to Deity alone are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

He claims *pre-existence,* and to be the *source of all existence.* "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). In addressing the Father He speaks of the glory which He had with Him "before the world was" (John 17:5). He maintained that the Father loved Him "before the foundation of the world" (17:24). The Word was "in the beginning with God." The life of all men, whether physical, resurrection of spiritual life, is derived from Christ—He is its source (John 5:21, 26; 14:6; 11:25). He is *eternal* and *unchangeable,* even as God (Hebrews 13:8—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever"). Nature, men, things change; He abides the same. "Change and decay in all around I see; O, Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

The *creation* of all things and their preservation is attributed to Jesus Christ. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). "In him all things hold together," He is the upholder of them all (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). The things in the universe do not happen haphazard. Christ governs and controls. Was that why Paul could say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God"? He well knew that Christ, his

Lord and Saviour, was at the helm of the universe. Nero might well say, "All things conspire against me"; Paul could say, "All things are working for my good."

The *forgiveness of sins* is an exclusively divine prerogative, yet Jesus claimed the right to forgive the sins of men (Mark 2:5-10; Luke 7:48). No wonder the scribes and Pharisees accused Him of blasphemy in thus assuming to Himself a right that belonged to God alone. Christ not merely declares that sins are forgiven, as a minister might do as representing God; He actually forgives men their sins. He looks upon sin as an act committed against Himself, a fact well illustrated in the parable of the Two Debtors (Luke 7:39-50).

Resurrection and judgment are claimed as the prerogatives of the Son of God. Not the Father, but the Son is to be the judge of all men (John 5:22; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Timothy 4:1; Acts 17:31). It is at the sound of the voice of the Son of God that the dead come forth out of their graves (John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40, 54; 11:25, 43).

The divine attributes of omnipotence (Matthew 28:18), omniscience (John 16:30; Colossians 2:3), omnipresence (Matthew 18:20; 28:20) are ascribed to Jesus Christ. What power He had in heaven and in earth! Nature (John 2:1-11), disease (Luke 4:38-41), death (John 11:43), demons (Luke 4:35), "all things" (Hebrews 2:8) were under His control. "What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Lord!" What marvelous knowledge he possessed of the inner thoughts (Mark 2:8), plans (John 13:21), and acts of men (Matthew 21:1-3; 16:21)! To Him the great panorama of the ages was as an open book (Matthew 24, 25). Past, present and future were well known to Him. Wherever His people met, there He was

in their midst. Distance is no barrier to His personal presence. He fills all things and every place (Ephesians 1:23). "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the days."

Surely, from the consideration of all these things there should be no room for honest doubt concerning the fact whether Jesus Christ was actually divine or not. No one could possess all these divine prerogatives and not be actually God. My soul, thou hast made no mistake when thou didst lean upon Jesus Christ for thy salvation! No mere human, self-appointed, self-commissioned Redeemer is He. All the power, wisdom and knowledge of the Godhead dwelleth in Him. He upon whom thou didst call for forgiveness and pardon will not leave thee until He has brought thee into His banqueting house and spread His banner of love over thee. "He that hath begun the good work, will finish it."

THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

God deals with men in this dispensation on the ground of the redemptive work of His Son Jesus Christ. This is the sum and substance of the "New Testament," or, better, "The New Covenant." When Jesus was observing the last supper in the upper room, He said to the disciples, as He handed them the wine to drink, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). A covenant is a method of dealing which God sees fit to establish between Himself and His creatures. According to the "New Covenant," then, God has redemptive dealings with men during this age only on the basis of the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ. How vital then for us, who stand in such great need of the benefits of grace such as pardon, peace, power, sanctification and glorification to

understand and appreciate, as fully as we may, the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus.

The Death of Jesus Christ.

"Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3). "Our Lord Jesus Christ * * * gave himself for our sins" (Galatians 1:3, 4).

How vital to Christianity is the death of Christ. Other great men have been valued for their lives. Jesus Christ wished to be remembered by His death: "Do this in remembrance of me" were the words He uttered as He passed the communion cup to the disciples. A memorial of His death was His parting gift to them. Christianity is more than ethical; it is redemptive. Indeed, it cannot be ethical unless it is first redemptive. The Cross is the magnet and power of Christian living (Galatians 1:4; 6:14).

Many and various are the views held concerning the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Many, alas! are totally unscriptural and therefore untrue. Let us glance briefly at some of the erroneous views of the death of Christ—*modern views of the atonement* they are called. Well, perhaps we need to be reminded that "what is new is not true, and what is true is not new."

Christ's death is looked upon by some as *an accident*, something unforeseen by Christ, and not in the plan of God. But Jesus knew all about it and foretold it long before it happened (Matthew 16:21; Mark 9:30-32). Jesus voluntarily laid down His life; it was not snatched from Him (John 10:17, 18). He knew all about the plots and plans of His enemies. He well knew, too, that He had come to fulfill the Old Testament scriptures which clearly portrayed His death (Luke 24:27, 44; Matthew 26:54).

Others look upon the death of Christ as *the death of a martyr*, like that of Polycarp, or Savonarola. But neither

Jesus nor any of the writers of the New Testament so speak of it. Paul had seen Stephen the martyr die, but he never associated forgiveness of sins with his death. Why, if Jesus died as a martyr, was He seemingly denied the presence of God in His last moments (Matthew 27:46), whereas other martyrs have had their last moments flooded with the sunshine of the divine presence? Can Christ's conduct in the garden of Gethsemane be explained on any other basis than that He was there as the bearer of the world's load of sin, which was crushing out His life? Was He a brave martyr if that is all He was? How does His apparent cringing (Luke 22:39-46) compare with the manifest heroism and bravery of many other martyrs?

Still others look upon Christ's death as being for the purpose of setting forth a great *moral example.* The sight of such suffering is intended to soften and win human hearts and to lead them to a better life. But does it? Do not men look the suffering Christ in the face and go deliberately sinning? And those who are softened and won by it are thus influenced because they realize that that suffering was for their sin, and that in that death they have life.

It is difficult to see how any so-called *governmental theory* of Christ's death can satisfy the facts in the case. Surely if God had to make an example of His great wrath against sin, it was hardly necessary that He should vent that wrath on the purest and sweetest man that ever lived. Why bring into the world a supernatural Being, as Christ was, for such a purpose? Were there not enough men already in the world, who were sinful enough to merit just such punishment? Why punish the innocent and not the guilty? Is that a good example of government?

We can readily see that the modern mind fails to find in the death of Christ what the orthodox faith holds as

essential to its true nature and purpose. The Scriptures set forth the death of Christ in a fourfold manner:

First, it is considered *a ransom:* "The Son of man came * * * to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). By a ransom is meant the price paid for the buying back of a person or thing. Man had sold himself to sin and Satan. Christ, by His death, paid the price which redeemed man from such thraldom (1 Peter 1:18: "Redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ").

Second, it is *a propitiation* (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2). The lid or covering of the ark of the covenant, which contained the ten commandments, and on which the blood of the sacrificed lamb was sprinkled by the high priest in order to make atonement for the sins against God and His holy law, was called "the mercy seat" or "propitiation." It was the place where God met the interceding high priest and received the blood of atonement by virtue of which He granted pardon to the sinful and sinning nation. So the death of Jesus Christ is the place where, and the ground on which, a holy God can grant pardon to sinful and sinning mankind. There God meets the sinner, and, on the ground of atoning blood, pardons and receives him into favor.

Third, it is looked upon as *a reconciliation* (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19; Colossians 1:20). Sin erected a barrier between God and man; it created an enmity between them. Communion and fellowship between God and man was impossible because of sin, and remained so until some means had been devised to remove sin, which was the ground of the existing enmity (Romans 8:7). Now the death of Jesus Christ is the ground on which and by reason of which such enmity is removed. Calvary removes, or makes possible to faith the removal of, the

barrier and the estrangement. God and man are friends by reason of the death of Christ—that is to say, such a friendship by relationship is possible, and actually takes place, when man accepts God's way of atonement.

Fourth, the death of Christ is *a substitution* (Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21). In these passages the actual word "substitution" is not found, but the idea certainly is. It is clearly taught that Jesus Christ, the righteous One, took the place of man, the sinner; that "He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us," in order that we, who had no righteousness, "might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Surely this means that Christ took our place. That is substitution. He gave Himself "for" (and that means "instead of," cf. Matthew 2:22; Luke 11:11) us and our sins.

> Upon a life I did not live;
> Upon a death I did not die;
> Upon Another's death, Another's life,
> I risk my soul eternally.

The *necessity for the death of Christ* lay in a twofold fact: the holiness of God, and the sin of man. There can be no true understanding of the atonement unless these two related facts are seen in their true light. Light views of either the holiness of God or the exceeding sinfulness of sin will not see much necessity for such a transaction as that which took place at Calvary. God is absolutely holy (see page 49). No sinner can for a moment stand in His presence, much less abide with Him eternally, so long as sin remains on, with, and in the sinner, and has not in some way been atoned for, punished, and removed. Only thus is it possible for a holy God to be righteous and at the same time pardon the sinner and treat him as though he had not sinned. "Being justified freely by his grace

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26). The cross of Christ was a practical demonstration or exhibition as to the seriousness with which God views sin. It was by no means a light, trivial thing. It stood as an eternal barrier between God and man. Nothing but the death of Christ could, in the estimation of God, remove that barrier. The absolutely holy nature of God and His righteousness is not now, because of the death of Christ, compromised, even though He does receive the repentant and believing sinner into fellowship with Himself.

Thus the death of Christ as a complete atonement for sin becomes *sufficient* for the whole world (John 1:29; Isaiah 53:6; 1 John 2:2), and *efficient* for every one who believes on Jesus (1 Timothy 4:10; Acts 13:38, 39). There is not a sinner in the whole world, however "weak," "without strength," "ungodly" (Romans 5:6-8), or "lost" (Luke 19:10) he may be who may not be a partaker of the benefits of Christ's death. Even the "chief of sinners" may find perfect salvation in God's wondrous provision (1 Timothy 1:15, 16). Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9) so that every man may say, "He loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). When this particular phase of the atonement first dawned upon Martin Luther, the great reformer, he was found sobbing beneath a crucifix, and moaning: "Mein Gott! Mein Gott! Fur Mich! Fur Mich!" ("My God! My God! For me! For me!")

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Christ came into the world in order that through dying He might pay the debt and free man from its awful burden (Hebrews 2:14). Christ was speaking of His death in its relation to the overthrow of Satan's power and kingdom when He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:31-33).

The sin question is no longer an unsettled question. Jesus Christ settled it once and for all on the Cross. That God was satisfied with that settlement of the sin question is evident from the fact that He raised Christ from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand (Philippians 2:5-10; John 16:10; Acts 2:30-33). The paramount question confronting man today is the Christ question: "What think ye of Christ?" "What shall I then do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" The issues of eternity are determined by man's answer to and attitude towards that question (John 8:21, 24). "For judgment (crisis) I am come into the world" (John 9:39).

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:20). "Who * * * was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ "from the dead the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4) had a most vital relation to His redemptive death. Had the body of Christ remained in the tomb beyond the divinely appointed time of three days and three nights; had the physical form of Jesus been permitted to "see corruption" (Acts 2:31); had it remained in that tomb in Joseph's garden until the "resurrection at the last day"

(John 11:24)—then, we would have had no proof that the Father was pleased with the sacrifice which the Son had made upon the cross, nor would we have had the assurance of pardon and forgiveness through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The raising of Jesus from the dead was the seal of the Father's approval on the work of His Son in connection with the offering of His life as an atonement for sin. The resurrection was the Father's "Amen!" to the Son's "It is finished!"

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead *"declared"* Him to be, set Him apart from all the other sons of men as, "the Son of God" (Romans 1:4). It did not "make" but "declared" him to be, the Son of God.

Again and again in His ministry Christ was challenged as to His authority for His acts and teachings. He appealed to His resurrection as proof of His claims to Deity and as sufficient guarantee as to the authority of His teachings (See Matthew 12:38-42; John 2:13-22). It was impossible that such an One as Jesus, spotless and sinless as He was, laying claims to divine prerogatives as He did, and appealing again and again as He did to His resurrection from the death as proof of the truth of it all—it was impossible that God should allow Him to have remained in the grave. To have done so would have been to give the lie to all the claims of His Son, and to leave the world in doubt as to any saving efficacy which might have attached itself to His death on the cross. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The believer in Christ may rest perfectly assured that all his sins which were laid on Jesus are entirely removed, pardoned, and

forgiven. God was perfectly satisfied with the sacrifice for our sins which His Son made. The empty tomb in Joseph's garden on that first Easter morn proclaimed to us the comforting news of pardon and justification. He that believeth on the Son is justified from all things (Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives to the believer *an interceding High-Priest in heaven* (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 4:15; 7:25, 26; Romans 8:34). Immediately after His ascension Christ took His place at the right hand of the Father there to intercede for the believer. Satan is the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10; Zechariah 3:1-3), and whenever a child of God sins Satan stands there in the presence of God (Job 2 and 3) ready to accuse him and to demand the execution of the sentence against sin. It is then that our Saviour pleads for us by virtue of the nail-scarred hands and feet and spear-thrust side. Jesus pleads His death and the Father's acceptance of such by raising Him from the dead as the ground for pardon and remittance of penalty for sins committed by those who have put their faith in Him. Our temporary falls after we have accepted Jesus as our Saviour do not mar our relationship with God the Father. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." His plea for us never fails (John 11:42: "I knew that thou hearest me always").

"The right hand of God" is *the place of power.* To that place Christ has been exalted by the Father (Ephesians 1:19-22: "The exceeding greatness of his power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might * * * and gave him to be the head over all things to the church").

All the power of the universe is in the hands of the Saviour, and it is there at and for the disposal of the believer; it is "power to usward who believe." No sin in the life is beyond His power to conquer, no weakness that cannot be offset by His strength, no failure that need not have been victory in His might, no virtue unattainable when He is looked to for power to realize it, no great difficulty that cannot be met by the exceeding greatness of His power, no scheme of Satan or wile of demon can prevail if we look to Him to whom all principalities and powers are subject. O believer in Christ, look to the risen, ascended and glorified Christ, and "nothing shall be impossible to you!" "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth."

There is one comforting thought which should not be overlooked in connection with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead, and that is the fact that *our own resurrection from the dead is absolutely guaranteed by His:* "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). As empty as was the tomb in Joseph's garden on that first Easter morn of our age twenty centuries ago will be every believer's grave in that morn when the trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall rise triumphant over death and the grave to enjoy immortality and eternal bliss. Of course the wicked too are raised from the dead at the sound of His voice, but their resurrection is to eternal death, not to life everlasting. (John 5:24-29). What a glorious hope! Think of all that is wrapped up in those blessed words: "Because I live, ye shall live also!" It means not only the raising and glorifying of our own bodies, but also those of our loved ones whom "we have loved long since and lost awhile." What a

meeting that will be! What a gathering of the saints from the north, south, east and west, to sit down with the loved ones in the kingdom of the Father!

But there is a sad aspect of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which pertains to the wicked and unbelieving. The resurrection of Christ is a proof positive and sufficient to all men as to *the certainty of a coming judgment day.* "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance (literally "faith" or "proof") unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Some day the wicked and unbelieving, those who have refused to believe in Christ even in the face of overwhelming proof of the truth of His claims—as evidenced by His resurrection from the dead—will have to stand before God and answer for such unbelief in the face of such convicting and convincing evidence (cf. John 16:7-10).

The Coming Again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The importance of a right understanding of this doctrine can hardly be overestimated. It has been said that where the first coming of Christ is mentioned once in the Scriptures, His second coming is mentioned eight times. One out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament is said to be devoted to its teaching. Three hundred and eighteen references to it are found in the 216 chapters. The prophets of the Old Testament (1 Peter 1:11), angels (Acts 1:11), Jesus Himself (John 14:3; Matthew 24, 25), as well as the apostles of the Lord Jesus (Acts 3:19, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Hebrews 9:28, etc.)—all bear witness to the

great doctrine of the coming again to this world of Jesus Christ. Such a hope is set forth as a great incentive to Christian living (1 John 3:3; Luke 21:34-36), as the outward and forward look of hope for the Church of Christ (Titus 2:13), and as the greatest solace of the believer during his earthly career (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18). Just why the doctrine of our Lord's coming again should not be proclaimed more than it is surpasses the comprehension of the thorough Bible student who sees this grand and glorious doctrine on almost every page of his Bible. Watching, working, waiting for the coming of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ought to be the characteristic pose of every believer.

When we speak of the coming again of our Lord we mean His *personal, visible, bodily coming* again to this earth (Acts 1:11), not in humiliation as at the first advent (Philippians 2:5-8), to suffer and to die for the sins of mankind (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:5), but to reign in glory, and to take to himself the kingdoms of this world. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

Pentecost may be looked upon as *a* but surely not *the* coming again of Christ. Nor was the destruction of Jerusalem, closely resembling the second coming as it did in so many points, the fulfillment of that predicted event. Nor yet are we to look upon death itself as the coming of Christ, for in death the believer goes to be with Christ rather than that Christ comes for him. One has but to note particularly the events that, in Scripture, are associated with the coming again of Christ, such as the raising of the righteous dead and the changing of the bodies of the righteous living, etc., to be convinced that no such things occurred at Pentecost

or the destruction of Jerusalem, nor do they occur at the death of the believer. The coming again of Jesus Christ is an event predicted in the Scriptures which is still future, and for the fulfillment of which, with longing and anxious hearts, we still look.

Just *when* this great event shall take place no one knows. No man knows either the day or the hour (Matthew 24:36-42; Acts 1:7). Those who would set a specific date for the coming of our Lord thereby discredit themselves as reliable expositors of the Word of God. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." In the face of such statements of Scripture as these, how dare any man set a date for our Lord's coming? "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Of course it is possible for us to know that *it is imminent*. The Master Himself gave certain signs which betokened the near approach of His coming (Matthew 24:36-42, compare also 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5). We should remember also in this connection that at least two great events comprise the coming again of our Lord: His coming *for* the saints (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-53), and His coming *with* them (Jude 14, 15, cf. Revelation 19:11-16). His coming *for* the saints is an event which may take place *at any moment*. Certain specific events must take place before the coming *with* the saints—such events as the seventieth week, the great tribulation (Daniel 9:25-27; Matthew 24:29).

We are not left in ignorance as to what Christ is going to do when He comes again. We may not know everything about it, but we know some things.

First, He is going to *raise the righteous dead.* "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Here is a clear statement as to what Christ will do *first:* He will raise the *righteous* dead; not all the dead; "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years should be finished" (Revelation 20:5, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23, 24). When Jesus comes again every grave of every believer will be empty. Like Lazarus they shall hear His voice and come forth. Believers rest in hope. We shall sleep but not forever; there shall be a glorious dawn. The body of that loved one whose eyes you may have closed in death, will awaken in that morn and see the King in His beauty in the land that is not far off. What a wonderful sight that will be to see graves, tombs, mausoleums overturned, and the dead in Christ coming forth triumphant over death!

Second, Christ will *change the bodies of the righteous living when* He comes again. We shall not all sleep (die), but we must "all be changed." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." These bodies of our humiliation are to be transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory (Philippians 3:21). No more sickness, no more bodies racked with pain, no more need of spectacles or crutches, no more physical infirmity, no more longing for the coming of the morn because of pain almost unbearable. All that will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:51).

Soon will our Saviour from heaven appear;
Sweet is the hope and its power to cheer;
All will be changed by a glimpse of His face;
This is the goal at the end of our race.

Third, *the saints will receive their reward* when the Lord comes. Then will be set up the judgment seat of Christ: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment will have reference to the works, not to the salvation of the believer. The moment a man believes in Christ the matter of his eternal salvation is settled once for all (John 5:24). It is never again brought into question. But the place he will have in the life to come will depend upon his faithfulness. Whether he shall be over three, or five, or ten cities will depend upon the use he has made of the gifts and talents God has entrusted to him. The "judgment seat of Christ," then, is not a judgment regarding destiny, but for adjustment, for reward or loss according to works, for position in the new sphere of life. That the saints are those referred to as appearing in this judgment is clear from verses 2 Corinthians 5:1, 5, 7, 9, and the First Epistle, 4:5, where it is said that those who are thus judged "shall have praise of God."

Not always is the believer rewarded in this life for all the good he does. "Light is sown for the righteous"; it will bring forth its fulness of fruition in the life to come. That is a comforting thought for the believer. Ofttimes when we do a bit of good for God we are misunderstood, our motives are impugned, we are accused of selfishness and a host of other things. What a comfort to know that some day our blessed Lord will say, "Well done," and reward us for every bit of good we have done in His name and for His sake!

Fourth, He is coming to *deal again with the Jew.* For many centuries the Jew has been cast off and the Gentiles

seem to have entered into his inheritance. But "the times of the Gentiles" will not last forever. The chosen people of God will again come into their own. God hath not cast off His people for ever (Romans 11:1, 25-32). The Jews will be restored to their own land (Isaiah 11:11; 60), probably in an unconverted state; they are likely to rebuild the temple and restore worship (Ezekiel 40-48). They will enter into a covenant with the antichrist, which will be broken and as a result they will pass through the great tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:21, 22, 29; Revelation 7:14, cf. 3:10). Finally, as a nation, they will turn to their Messiah, and become great missionaries (Zechariah 12:10; 8:13-23).

Fifth, Christ is coming again to *set up His millennial reign on the earth* (Revelation 20:1-4). During this period Christ Himself is King (Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 1:30-33). Jerusalem will doubtless be the capital city (Isaiah 2:1, 2), to which pilgrims will wend their way (Zechariah 14:16). It is likely that the apostles will reign over the Jew, the Church over the Gentiles (Isaiah 66; Matthew 19:28). Sin will then be as scarce as righteousness is now, and righteousness will then be as prevalent as sin is now. The reign of Christ will be one of equity and righteousness (Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 9:19). Among the events following the Millennium are apostasy and rebellion (Revelation 20:7-9), the destruction of Satan (20:10), the great White Throne judgment (20:11, 15), and the new heavens and the new earth (21 and 22).

The five events here set forth by no means comprise every event connected with Christ's coming again to this earth. They are among the principal events of that time, and probably of deepest interest to us.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We may speak of three ages as characterizing the revelation contained in the Bible: the age of the Father, comprising the Old Testament; the age of the Son, as contained in the Gospels; the age of the Holy Spirit, comprising the remainder of the New Testament. In the first age God the Father is the prominent actor or executive; in the second, God the Son; in the third, God the Holy Spirit. We are living in the age of the Spirit, and it becomes us, therefore, to familiarize ourselves with the Holy Spirit: His nature, being, person and work. The words of Paul to the Corinthians, "Brethren, concerning matters pertaining to the Spirit I would not have you ignorant" (1 Epistle 12:1) are appropriate to us in this day when many Christians are in the same ignorant condition with reference to the Holy Spirit as were those Ephesian believers who did not so much as know that there was any Holy Spirit, or that He had yet been bestowed upon believers (Acts 19:1-7). In this primer of Christian doctrine we can only point out those things, and these only briefly, which are considered most necessary for the Christian to know for holy living and effective service.

The Holy Spirit is a Person.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he * * * he * * * he," etc. (John 16:13).

Because the ministry and operations of the Spirit are of a somewhat more mystical and invisible nature than

that of the Father—in the creation, for example, and that of the Son—in the incarnation and redemption, and because the Spirit is spoken of in such symbolic and figurative expressions as wind, breath, fire, oil, etc., we are prone to look upon the Holy Spirit as less of a Person than either of the other Persons in the Godhead. So much is said in the Scriptures of the influence, grace, and power of the Spirit that we may be led, unless we are careful, to look upon the third Person in the Trinity as a manifestation of the Father or the Son or of both, rather than as a Person distinct as Father or Son.

Our conception of the Holy Spirit as a Person or an influence has its effect upon our life and service. It is of great moment for me to know whether the Holy Spirit is an influence or power which I may use in my life and service for God, or whether He is a divine Person who is to use me as He sees fit in order that I may glorify the Father and the Son in my life and service. We can readily see then how vital it is for every Christian to know all he can about the Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit is a Person is clear from the fact that *He takes the place of a Person*—Jesus Christ: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). Only a person can take the place of a person. Jesus has announced His departure to His disciples. They are feeling sorrowful. He would comfort them by the assurance that the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, would take His place, and really do more for them than He himself had been able to do: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:12, 13).

For this reason also *personal pronouns* are used of the Holy Spirit. No less than twelve times in John 16:7, 8, 13-15 is the pronoun "he" (Greek: ekeinos—that one, He) used of the Holy Spirit. This is the same word that is used to describe Christ, whose place the Spirit takes (cf. 1 John 2:6; 3:3, 5, 7, 16). This is a fact of paramount importance when we remember that the Greek word for *spirit* is a neuter word and should have a neuter pronoun. In Romans 8:16, 26 the word "itself" in the Authorized Version should be "himself," as in the Revised Version.

A careful consideration of the *Baptismal formula* (Matthew 28:19), and the *Apostolic benediction* (2 Corinthians 13:14), compel us to attribute personality to the Holy Spirit, even as to the Father and the Son. How foolish and irreverent it would be, for example, to say, "Go, baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the *wind* or *breath*."

The Holy Spirit possesses *attributes of personality:* He has *knowledge* (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11). He *distributes* spiritual gifts (ch. 12). He has *will* and *mind* (1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 8:27). He *speaks* (Revelation 2:7), *makes intercession* (Romans 8:26), *oversees* matters pertaining to the Church (Acts 13:2). He may be *grieved* (Ephesians 4:30), *insulted* (Hebrews 10:29), *lied to* (Acts 5:3), and *blasphemed* and *sinned against* (Matthew 12: 31, 32).

What a wonderful truth lies in this phase of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit! And this is the truth that lies couched in the word "Comforter," which is a (or perhaps the) name of the Spirit, and meaning One whom we may call to our side in the time of trouble. Side by side He walked with the faithful in the early church: they "walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:31).

The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person.

"Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." "To lie to the Holy Ghost" (Acts 5:3, 4).

In the scripture just quoted the Holy Spirit is distinctly called *God*. He is also called *Lord* (2 Corinthians 3:18), a name, which, as we have already seen (see p. 81), is a name of Deity.

Attributes of Deity are fully possessed by the Holy Spirit. He is *omniscient:* He knows all things (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11), and thus, knowing what is the mind of God and what is in our hearts, He is eminently fitted to be Intercessor and Pleader in our behalf (Romans 8:26). Indeed our prayers are true prayers only as they are inspired and indited by the Spirit of God; only then will our requests be "according to the will of God."

The Holy Spirit is *omnipresent:* He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10). But only God fills heaven, and earth, and everywhere; therefore the Holy Spirit is God.

Omnipotence is ascribed to the Spirit: "the power of the Highest" is His (Luke 1:35). The *creation* of all things is ascribed to the Spirit even as unto the Father and the Son (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30, R. V.). "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." The new and *spiritual creation* within the soul of man is the work of the Spirit (John 3:5-8), as is also *the resurrection* of the believer's body in that great day (Romans 8:11).

The Holy Spirit therefore is entitled to our *worship*. He is to be worshiped as God because He is actually God. It is a sin to withhold worship from Him. It is true that the Scriptures do not as distinctly enjoin upon us the necessity of such worship as they do in the case of the Father and the Son. There is a reason for such silence. It is

pre-eminently the work of the Holy Spirit to bear witness, not to Himself, but to Jesus Christ. It is His work to keep in the background, as it were, and to make Christ prominent. "He shall not speak of Himself." "He shall glorify me." "He shall take of the things of mine and show them unto you" (John 16:14).

THE RELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE BELIEVER

It is exceedingly important for every Christian to know what relation he sustains to the Holy Spirit. Success in the Christian life in all its phases depends upon the Holy Spirit. Ignorance in this respect means certain defeat and failure.

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

"But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

No man can come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour and the acceptance of Him as such unless the Spirit of God enables him so to do. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in (by) the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). His regeneration (John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5), and articulation into the body of Christ as a member thereof (1 Corinthians 12:13) is the distinctive work of God's Holy Spirit. He is the Executive of the Godhead, and applies to the soul of man the work of redemption wrought by the Son and planned by the Father (see Ephesians 1:3-14). It is erroneous therefore for Christians to pray that God would give them His Holy Spirit as though He were not already abiding in them, for He already possesses them, otherwise they are not children of God (Romans 8:9). The *fulness* of the Spirit they may not have, but His *indwelling* they most certainly have (1 Corinthians 6:19). At Pentecost the

Holy Spirit came to abide with the believer and the Church, and He has never left them since, nor will He, until that day when "he that restraineth shall be taken away" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Every Christian does not have the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31).

Egypt always has the river Nile, but not always the *overflow* of the Nile. And yet on that overflow the harvests of Egypt depend. When the Nile overflows its banks it leaves behind it a rich, alluvial deposit which moistens and enriches the soil and makes an abundant harvest possible. No overflow means famine for Egypt. Just so is it with the Christian in his relation to the Holy Spirit. He may have the Holy Spirit *indwelling,* but if He does not have the Spirit *infilling* and *overflowing* his life will be barren of the graces, gifts, and fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23).

To many believers this specific experience of the infilling with the Holy Spirit comes some time after their conversion, too often after long years of wearisome defeat and failure in life and service. Then, O glorious experience! there comes to them this blessing of "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," some call it, or the "filling with," or "outpouring of" the Spirit, others name it, and after that all life and service seems new, rich, and fruitful. There is no need, surely, that any given length of time should elapse between a man's conversion and this specific blessing of the Holy Spirit's presence and power. It is simply a matter of taking. We possess as much of the Spirit as we are willing to take and are willing to make room for in our hearts. We are straitened in ourselves, not in Him. The children of

Israel had no need to wander forty years in the wilderness before entering the promised land. It was their unbelief that made wanderers of them (Hebrews 4:1-3). They could have entered Canaan a few days after they left Egypt if they had believed God and His promise.

There is such a thing as "the law of the Spirit" (Romans 8:2). When we obey that law, even though it be the law of faith, we receive the fulness of the Spirit. "He hath given the Holy Spirit to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). *Obedience* to the will and word of the Spirit is one of the conditions of being "filled with the Spirit." Are we, as far as we know from the Word of God (and are we diligently studying the Word of God to find out what His will is?) living up to the light we have received and gladly rendering full obedience? Disobedience to any known command will issue in a famine of the Spirit's power in life.

Jesus Christ must be *enthroned in the heart* and life if we are to enjoy the fulness of the Spirit's presence. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). By "the Spirit" here is meant the infilling and overflowing of the Spirit, as is clear from verses 37 and 38. If self rather than Christ is the ruler on the throne of our hearts, we cannot have the fulness of the Spirit. He came into the world to "glorify Christ," and Him alone. He will not give you power to run your own watermill. Christ is the beginning, as Christ is the end of the Spirit-filled life. Is He of your life and mine?

The Holy Spirit and His fulness is to be *received by faith.* Just as we received Christ—by faith, so must we receive the blessing of the Spirit (Galatians 3:2-3). "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). We are to wait for feeling

in connection with the receiving of the Holy Spirit's fulness not one whit more than we waited for it in our receiving Christ. If we have met the requirements, if we have obeyed "the law of the Spirit," then it is our bounden duty to believe that God has kept His word and promise and filled us with His Holy Spirit. Feeling and emotion may or may not attend this wondrous experience of the Holy Spirit. To some it comes at once, to many others not until some time after, and, usually in connection with some bit of work done for Him in obedience to some newly revealed duty—such as always faces the believer when he has taken an advanced step in the life of the Holy Spirit. We must believe God, whether we have any feeling or not. It is "a wicked and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign." Blessed, yea, rather blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29).

Some results of having the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

Assurance of our personal salvation is a work of the Spirit in our hearts. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13, 14). It is the Spirit Himself who "bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). It is not enough for a man to be saved; he should *know he is saved* (1 John 5:13). Yet how many Christians there are, real Christians too, who do not enjoy the blessing of assurance of salvation. They cannot be joyful because they are not sure that their "sins *are* forgiven" (1 John 2:12), that their names *are* written in the Lamb's book of life in heaven (Luke 10:20; Revelation 20:15), and that they are even *now* actual sons and daughters of God

(John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 2). "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine!"

Fulness of power in life and service is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). What a marked difference is discernible in the life and service of the apostles before and after Pentecost! What blunders Peter, for example, was continually making, and what a lack of power in testimony there was in his life before Pentecost: impulsive (Mark 14:47), headstrong and arbitrary (John 13:8; Matthew 16:22, 23), cowardly (Mark 14:66-72), and even denying that he ever knew his Master (Matthew 26:34, 35, 69-75)! Yet what a tremendous contrast after that the Holy Spirit had fallen on him! What calm, poise, courage, boldness, sacrifice was exhibited in his whole life after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit! Read carefully the account of his ministry in Acts, chapters 2-12, especially chapters 2-5, and note the change. And just this difference will be made in the lives of all who receive of His fulness.

Victory over sin is another result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. What a deep groan of defeat and hopeless failure issues from the seventh chapter of Romans! And why? Read it carefully and see, and note, as you read it, that the Holy Spirit is not once mentioned in the chapter. What a peon of triumphant victory issues forth from the eighth chapter! Read it over and see. There is freedom from condemnation; fulness and freeness of access to God; joy amid tribulations; a spiritual mind and disposition—a boon which we all so earnestly desire, for sins of the mind and disposition seem to be the last over which we get victory; a glorious knowledge of sonship and heirship; and, finally, the assurance of no separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Do we not cry out with strong desire for such a life as this? The

secret of it all lies in the Holy Spirit. No less than sixteen times the Holy Spirit is mentioned in this chapter. It is the Spirit's work to war against the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16, 17; Romans 8:2, 3). The way to overcome that "law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:23), is to lay hold of the great truth that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (8:2) which was in my members working defeat, and leading me to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

A deeper and more satisfying knowledge of the Word of God (John 16:13-15). The same Holy Spirit who inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20, 21) must also illumine the saints of today to read and understand the same Scriptures. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. * * * But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:14, 10). The natural understanding is darkened (Ephesians 4:18) and needs the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit before it is able to see the things of God as revealed in His Word (1:18; 1 John 2:20, 27). The "pure in heart" they "see God"; all others are in darkness. Would you have the Scriptures "opened unto you," until your heart burns within you (Luke 24:32)? Then pray that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

The fulness of the Holy Spirit assures the believer of *guidance* in all the affairs of life. The Christian is "led by the Spirit of God" (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18). How full the book of Acts is of the guidance afforded

God's children by the Holy Spirit! The believer is thus guided as to what he should say; where he should go; to whom he should speak; in what field he should labor, etc. (8:29; 16:6, 7; 13:2-4; 10:19, 20; 11:12). How often in life's journey the child of God comes to the fork of the roads, and hesitates because he knows not which way to turn! What great issues ofttimes depend upon the decision of just such moments! Which road shall we take? He who is filled with the Spirit of God will hear, at such times, a voice within, or will get some very definite and clear word from the Bible, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The indication of the Spirit's guidance may not come to you in exactly the same way it has come to others, but you will assuredly recognize the leading as beings yours, and you will follow on to find that you were led aright.

THE RELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE WORLD

Probably there is no more vital aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit than this. It is He who first leads the soul into the light of the knowledge of God as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the world.

"No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but by (in) the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

The teaching of Jesus Himself with respect to this particular point is clearly set forth in His farewell discourse to the disciples: "And he (the Holy Spirit), when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged" (John 16:8-11, R. V.).

It is the specific work of the Holy Spirit to take the

words, deeds, claims, evidences of divine commission to be the Saviour of the world of the Christ, together with the resurrection as the proof of the genuineness of all these claims, as well as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost which was the evidence to the world that God had accepted the finished work of Jesus Christ—it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and He alone, to cause man to see all these things, and by seeing them to present such proof and evidence of the reality of Christ's claims and work as to leave the man who rejects Christ, without excuse, and the man who accepts the evidence and receives Jesus, saved.

Thus it is that men are regenerated or born again (John 3:3-5). The Holy Spirit is the agent in that regeneration of the soul of man without which no man will see, much less enter, the kingdom of heaven. Our salvation is "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

As men listen to the preaching of the gospel and believe it, or read the inspired Word of God and receive its testimony concerning Christ and His redemptive work, the Holy Spirit falls upon their hearts and regenerates them through that Word and that faith (1 Corinthians 4:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:12, 13; 3:5).

Herein lies the necessity on the part of the Christian worker to realize that the conversion of men is brought about "not by might, nor by power" that is human, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." We may scatter the flowers of poetry; we may diffuse the light of science; we may marshal words and phrases; we may present logical arguments, elaborately stated and eloquently discussed; we may roll the thunders of eloquence and display the powers of illustration; but not any one nor all of these can save a

soul unless the Holy Spirit of God falls with power on the consecrated effort we have put forth. Dead souls cannot be argued, entertained, dazzled into life. The Holy Spirit of God must breathe life into them. Nothing but the Breath of God can make these dry bones live (Ezekiel 37).

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to produce in the heart of man the faith which saves.

"To each one is given * * * faith by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:9). "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (12:3).

It is not enough that a man be convinced by the evidence of the Word of God that Jesus Christ is not only the divinely appointed Redeemer but also his own personal Saviour. Knowledge does not save. Not believing *about* but believing *into* Jesus saves a man. A man must not only believe the claims of Jesus, but must also receive Him to be all He claims to be. This is the truth of John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." The power to "receive" Christ as Saviour is not of ourselves, but of God's Holy Spirit. Indeed the whole work of salvation from start to finish is of God: "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it (your whole salvation from start to finish) is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

O, to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be!

CHAPTER SIX

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BELIEVE ABOUT SATAN

CHAPTER SIX

SATAN

There is probably no doctrine in the Christian faith pertaining to which such light views are held as concerning Satan, the adversary of both God and man. To mention the name of the devil is to invite sarcasm and ridicule. and bring forth the word, "Oh, nobody believes in the devil nowadays." This is probably one of the cleverest schemes of the devil to obtain mastery over man. If Satan does not exist then what is the use of man preparing himself in any way to resist the machinations of such a being as "the evil one"? Of course the caricatures of Satan as found in literature outside of the Bible, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost,* for example, are responsible to a very large extent for such unbelief in the existence and personality of Satan. No earnest and devout student of the Scriptures can have a real or lasting doubt that such a being exists. But Satan cannot be laughed out of existence.

Satan is a person.

"He is a liar, and the father of it * * * He is a murderer" (John 8:44).

It is quite common in some quarters to speak of Satan as devil with the "d" dropped off: "evil," thus denying the personality of the evil one. We should not forget, however, in this connection that the word Satan is in the masculine, and masculine pronouns are used in speaking of him. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar,

and the father of it." The devil lies, sins, murders (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8)—can a mere influence do these things?

A careful and unprejudiced reading of the account of the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4) will undoubtedly impress one with the fact that Satan is just as much a person as is Christ. The same is true with regard to the story of Job, his integrity and trials, as found in Job, chapters 2 and 3.

Attributes and qualities of personality are recorded of Satan which should remove all doubt on this question (cf. Zechariah 3:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Psalm 109:6). "Such offices as those ascribed to Satan in the Scriptures require an officer; such a work manifests a worker; such power implies an agent; such thought proves a thinker; such designs form a personality."

Let us take, for example, the temptations of life which come to us all at some time or other. They are said to come from three sources: the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have no doubt concerning some of the temptations that beset us that they have their origin in the flesh, and that certain others have their promptings from a sinful environment. There are temptations in life, however, which we cannot honestly and fairly trace to either of these two sources—they must come from a personality of evil altogether outside of ourselves and our environment. It was the late Dr. Joseph Parker, of London, who said, "The old serpent, the devil, has spoken with fatal eloquence to every one of us no doubt; and I do not need a dissertation from the naturalist on the construction of a serpent's mouth to prove it. Object to the figure, if you will, but the grim, damning fact remains."

That Christ recognized the existence and activity of such a personality of evil is clearly evident from a careful

reading of the gospel story (cf. Matthew 13:19, 39; John 13:2; see also Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

The origin of Satan is not clearly stated in the Scriptures. It is inferred from certain scriptures (such as Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-14; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Corinthians 11:14) that he was once an angel of light, probably the leader of all the shining hosts of God, and that, somehow or other, probably through pride, he and other angels fell from their glorious estate and were cast down from their places in heaven. That, to some extent at least, Satan still retains some of that former dignity, power, and might may be inferred from Jude 8 and 9: Referring to those false teachers who "speak evil of dignities," Jude says: "Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." What great power, think you, does Satan still retain, when, as Daniel says, he (Satan) had power to oppose one of the chief angels (Daniel 10:12, 13)? Is he not referred to by Christ as "the strong man armed" (Luke 11:21), and "the prince of this world" (John 14:30)?

Nor is the teaching of Paul less clear and distinct than that of Christ. To Paul Satan is the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Is there not a tremendous *supra*-natural force of "principalities and powers" subject to his word and will—"his angels" as they are called (6:11, 12, cf. Matthew 25:41; 12:24; Luke 11:14-18)? Who is "the god of this world"? To whom do the men of the world bow and whom do they serve? Is it not Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19)? Un-

doubtedly so. To the great apostle, the kingdom of darkness, over which Satan and his hosts presided, was as stern a reality as the kingdom of light over which Christ and His good angels ruled. He felt it his life work to turn people from the power of Satan unto the power of God (Acts 26:18).

The names of Satan.

"Adversary the devil" (1 Peter 5:8); "Satan" (Zechariah 3:1).

The name "satan" means "an adversary"; it is so translated in Zechariah 3:1, R. V., margin: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan (the Adversary) standing at his right hand to be his adversary." In 1 Peter 5:8 he is referred to as "your adversary the devil." By this designation we are to understand that Satan is the perpetual and uncompromising foe, adversary of man, continually opposing him in every work of righteousness which he seeks to accomplish. Of course, in the same sense Satan is equally the adversary of God, for the purposes of God and the children of God are of the same nature.

Satan is the *slanderer,* "the accuser of the brethren," the *diabolos,* the one who slanders God to man (Genesis 3:1-7) and man to God (Job 1:9; 2:4; see Revelation 12:9; Matthew 13:39). Herein lies our need of "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Satan is always on the lookout for the faults and failings of the people of God in order that, magnifying them, he may, misrepresenting the saints, bring their faults and sins before God.

No scheme, device, or plan is too wicked for him to resort to if only he can thwart the purpose of God or spoil the plan of God in a believer's life. For this reason he is called

"the wicked one" or "the evil one" (Matthew 13:19; 1 John 5:18, 19). And every such plan in the heart of any person, believer or unbeliever, to hurt, injure or destroy the child of God or hurt his influence or reputation has its origin with the devil: he "put it into the heart" (John 13:2, 27; Acts 5:3).

It is principally as *"the tempter"* that Satan is described in the Scriptures (Matthew 4:3). And as such not one of the children of men is able to escape his malicious scheming. God had one Son without sin, but no son without temptation. Even Jesus Himself was "tempted of the devil." And how cunning and sagacious is the tempter at such times! How we need to be on our guard against "the wiles of the devil," his carefully laid plots and plans to overthrow us or to cause us to fall! To accomplish such he appears to us as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14), as one who would help our faith (Matthew 4:6). The "old serpent" is subtle (Genesis 3:1), and, as the "roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8), is strong. Satan's subtlety is seen in tempting us in our weak moments, as he did Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4) and in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22), and Elijah, in the reaction that came from his great victory over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 19). When we are strong, and after great successes we need to be on our guard against the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:1; John 6:15; cf. verses 1-14). How many a man, who would shun the thing that is confessedly and openly wrong, may be tempted as was Christ, to do right things in a wrong way, to bring about good results by questionable methods (Matthew 4:1-11). How often does Satan delude his followers by giving them power to perform "signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The fact that any man or religious cult is

able to perform healings is no sign that he or it is of God; that power may be given by the devil.

Victory over Satan.

"The prince of this world hath been judged" (John 16:11). *Satan is a conquered enemy.* The death of Christ on the cross did something to Satan; there, potentially at least, Satan and his authority over men received their death-stroke. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:31,32). "Ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:14). Jesus Christ by His atoning death and resurrection from the dead made Satan a conquered enemy so far as the believer in Christ is concerned. At Calvary our Saviour "despoiled the principalities and the powers," and "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them" by His cross (Colossians 2:15). Satan can touch the child of God only as he is allowed to by the Father: "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? . . . But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:9-11). Jesus said to His disciples, and to us through them, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Christ in the heart of the believer is greater than all the power of the devil in the world (cf. 1 John 4:4).

It is exceedingly important for the Christian in his endeavor to lead a victorious life that he really understand exactly what has taken place with reference to Satan and his power because of the finished redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Victory is already achieved for us through

Christ. We are under no obligation to yield to temptation. We do not need to sin (1 John 2:1). The place of Satan is under the feet of the believer: "And the Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20).

Of course Satan must be *resisted:* "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:8, 9). "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). In order to resist we must stand clad, not in any armor of our own making, but in the armor of God so completely described in Ephesians 6:10-20. *Obedience* and loving *submission to the will of God* (James 4:7) is also a secret of victory over the wiles of the devil. To *store the Word of God in the heart* (as Christ undoubtedly had done, judging from His ready use of it in the wilderness temptation) is to be always ready for the sudden and vicious attacks of the adversary of the soul (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:17).

Some day there will be no adversary of the soul of man roaming around seeking whom he may devour. In the plan of God for the ages there will be a time when Satan shall be cast into the lake of fire, there to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:11; 19:20; 20:10).

Satan has a purpose in the world and a place in the divine plan. Have you ever stood outside a blacksmith's shop and watched the blacksmith and his helper? See, the smith takes a piece of red- or white-hot iron out of the fire and places it on the anvil. Holding the bit of iron by the pinchers in one hand, he places it just where he wants it on the anvil. In the other hand he holds a small hammer or other steel implement with which to mould the hot iron into whatever shape he desires. At his side stands

the helper, a great big, burly fellow, stripped to the waist, with a huge sledge-hammer in his hand, waiting for orders from the blacksmith. When the signal is given the helper swings the great hammer, using all his main strength until he is a mass of perspiration, in shaping that bit of iron in the smith's hand into whatever shape the blacksmith himself desires. So is it with Satan. God holds His children in His own hand, and He makes the devil sweat to make saints according to His own will out of them.

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